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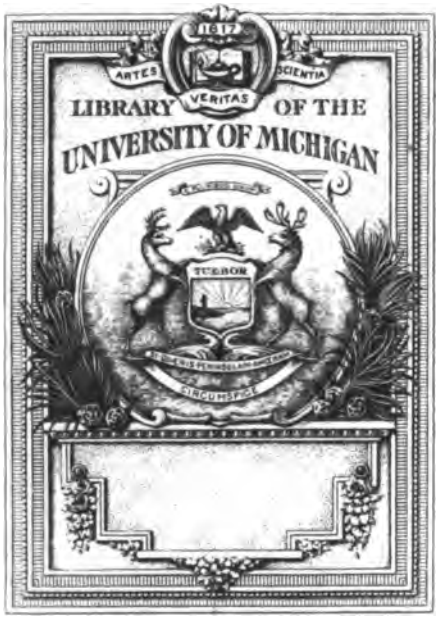

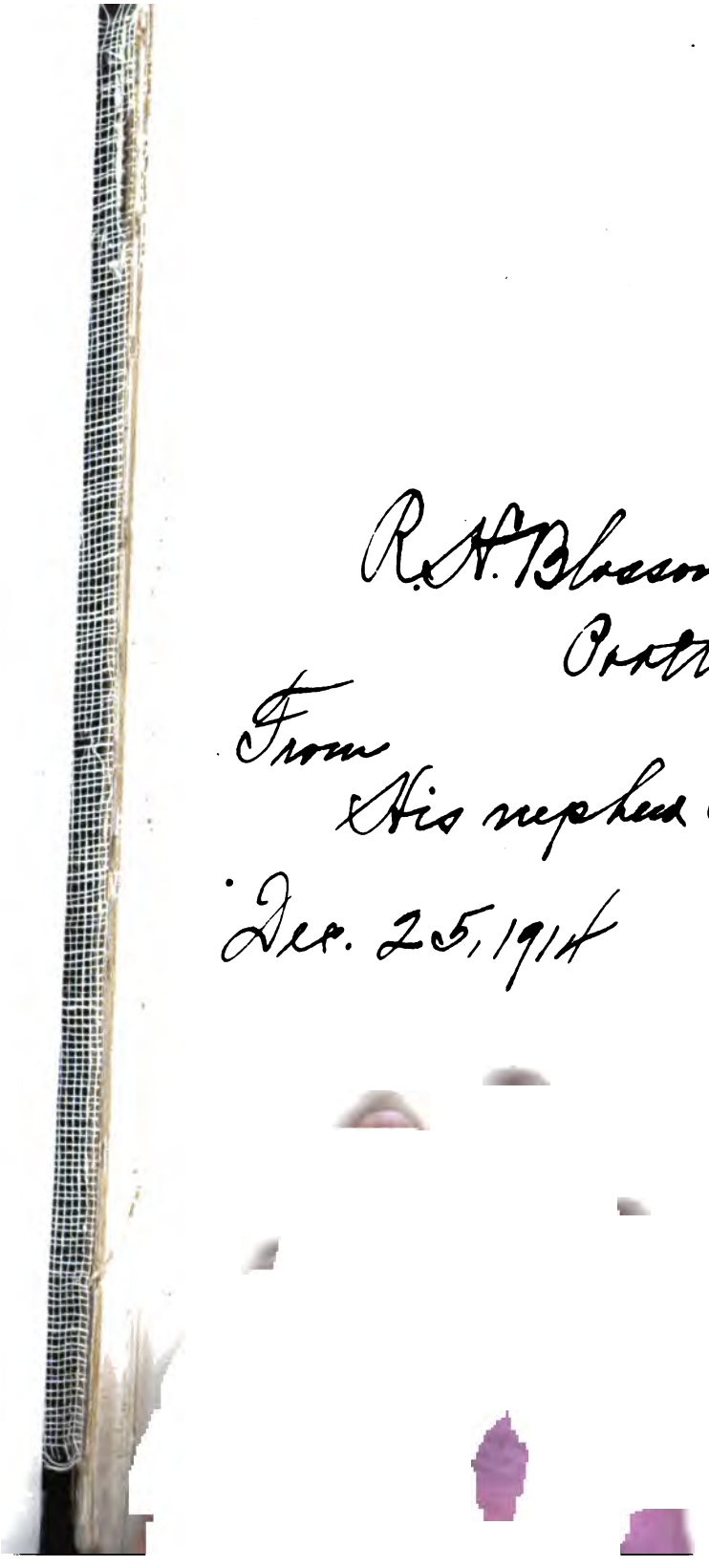

R. H. Blossom,
Portland, Ore.
From
His nephew R. J. Gordon
Dec. 25, 1914

THE FIELD OF BUENA VISTA

By Carl Nebel

From a lithograph in *The War Between the United States and Mexico*, by George W. Kendall

The Winning of the Far West

A History of the Regaining of Texas, of the Mexican War, and the Oregon Question; and of the Successive Additions to the Territory of the United States, within the Continent of America:

1829–1867

By

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To

M. TAYLOR PYNE

FRIEND OF PRINCETON

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PREFACE

THE *Winning of the Far West* is a study of such national action and international relations as have resulted in additions, within the Continent of North America, to the territory of the United States. It is based upon authoritative, and in part unpublished, sources, and was written, at the instance of the publishers, to constitute a continuation of Colonel Roosevelt's *Winning of the West.* For the views expressed in the volume, Colonel Roosevelt is, however, in no way responsible.

The record of the winning of the west presents a theme of epic character, and one not likely ever to be repeated in the history of mankind; but the winning of the far west is like a continued story, whose end is still hidden. To the student of to-day it means the acquisition of Texas, New Mexico, and California; Utah, Nevada, and Arizona; Washington, Oregon, and Alaska, with parts of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. To the next generation it may mean far more; for we are a nation in process of becoming, and what we shall be no man can predict. As the history of nations runs, moreover, our record of expansion is one singularly free from violence and fraud; and this volume will have failed of its mission, if it does not

show that the winning of the Far West is an achievement in which every citizen of the Republic may feel an honest pride.

My first acknowledgment of indebtedness is to the men who left us the documents: explorers and soldiers, writing their journals after laborious days, by the flickering camp-fire; statesmen and orators welding them into form; clerks of frontier conventions; journalists and adventurers who followed the armies, or pressed into the land of promise in search of gold. Documents produced under such conditions breathe the very atmosphere of the free plain and mountain, and without them the winning of the Far West would remain an untold tale.

My second acknowledgment is to the men of vision who preserved these priceless treasures: librarians and editors; biographers and monographists; and the long line of faithful historians who have worked from the sources. To all of these, the nation itself owes a debt of gratitude; for no nation can be accounted great whose history is unknown; and history can be known only through records kept by those who lived during the period described and preserved by those who came immediately after them.

R. M. McElroy.

Princeton, N. J.,
September 23, 1914.

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The Winning of the Far West

The Winning of the Far West

CHAPTER I

JACKSON, HOUSTON, AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF TEXAS

1829–1836

TO reach the stirring scenes of the Mexican War, it is necessary to pass through the borderland of Texas. Back of the gallant figures of Scott and Zachary Taylor must always stand, in the history of that memorable struggle, the still more heroic figures of Sam Houston and his great friend and political patron, Andrew Jackson; while flitting about them in the half light of imperfect historical record, glides the shadowy form of John C. Calhoun. Perhaps we shall never know the full story of the relation which each of these men bears to the Texas Revolution, the annexation of Texas, and the resulting war with Mexico, but what we do know constitutes a political drama of surpassing interest.

There is little to inspire enthusiasm, in the once accepted view that Jackson formed and Houston

executed a plan for stealing Texas[1] in order to add strength to the slave section of the American nation, but it is quite another story when we learn that Jackson and Houston, in this whole vast intrigue, were but seeking to redeem for the nation, an imperial domain which they believed to have been alienated, secretly and for sectional purposes, by "that arch traitor to the interest of his country, John Quincy Adams,"[2] as Jackson characteristically terms him.

There lie before me as I write, the faded and yellowed manuscripts of a number of Jackson's letters[3] which for over half a century have escaped the notice of inquisitive historical investigators. In one of these Jackson thus refers to his discovery of what he calls the perfidy of "that wicked and reckless old man, John Q. Adams:"[4] "In 1829–30 . . . Mr. Irwin[5] (Minister to Madrid when negotiation respecting the boundary of Louisiana and the cession of Florida was transferred to Washington) placed in my hands a copy

[1] John Quincy Adams's *Memoirs*, ix, pp., 429–430. *Ibid.*, xi, 349.

[2] Jackson to Maj. Wm. B. Lewis.—Ford MSS., Lenox Library, New York.

In an article in the Charleston *Mercury* of April 25, 1844, John Randolph makes the charge even more fiercely, declaring that Adams had "deliberately and knowingly given away the territory which Spain stood ready to confirm to us, designing thereby to consummate his own far-reaching and perfidious design, to emasculate the South of all its progressive political strength, and leave Missouri to the tender mercies of the political fanaticism which assailed her almost simultaneously with this treacherous and atrocious surrender of Texas."

[3] The Ford Collection, presented to the Lenox Library by J. Pierpont Morgan.

[4] Jackson to Lewis, March 22, 1844.—Ford MSS.

[5] Geo. W. Erving.

of the correspondence between him and the Spanish Minister at Madrid, which shwd. that he had negotiated a treaty by which Spain recognized the ancient limits of Louisiana to the Rio Grande and ceded Florida for the sum paid for it —that he had wrote to Washington for powers to close this Treaty at Madrid; instead of our executive sending him power, he received an order to transfer the negotiation to Washington, where Mr. Adams closed the negotiation confining the western boundary of Louisiana to the Sabine."[1]

"I at once knew," he adds, "that Mr. Adams' object was to keep down the growing political ascendancy in the South and West."[2]

This diatribe is characteristically Jacksonian. A deep, personal hatred of John Quincy Adams rendered him a prejudiced judge in the case. He

[1] "It was," said Clay in a speech to the House on April 3, 1820 (Clay's Works, Reed-McKinley edition, v, 212), ". . . the case of an avowed cession of territory from the United States to Spain," adopting as the Texas boundary line, "the Sabine, which neither of the parties had ever contended was the ancient limit of Louisiana . . . and the treaty itself proclaims its purpose to be a cession from the United States to Spain." In one of a series of articles presented to the House by Clay, and defended in this speech, appear the words: "that no treaty, purporting to alienate any portion . . . [of our national territory] is valid without the concurrence of Congress." *Ibid.*, 206; J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, v, 53.

[2] Don Onis, in his *Memoir*, claims praise for having exchanged Florida for Texas. "I will agree," he says, "that the third article might, with greater clearness, have been expressed thus: 'In exchange the United States cede to his Catholic Majesty the province of Texas, etc.'—but as I had been for three years maintaining . . . that this province belonged to the king, it would have been a contradiction to express, in the treaty, that the United States cede it to his majesty."—Quoted Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 317 note. For text of the third article see *ibid.*, Appendix K, 3.

knew that this surrender of national territory had been made with full consciousness, upon the part of President Monroe that more territory might have been secured in the treaty; for while its ratification was pending, Monroe had written him:[1] "Having long known the repugnance with which the Eastern portion of our union, or rather some of those who have enjoyed its confidence, . . . have seen its aggrandizement to the West and South, I have been decidedly of opinion that we ought to be content with Florida for the present. . . ." In reply Jackson wrote: "I am clearly of your opinion that, for the present, we ought to be content with the Floridas."[2]

From this it is evident that the surrender of Texas to obtain Florida, had been due to internal difficulties, connected with the Missouri controversies which were then distracting the Union. Monroe knew it, Jackson knew it, the Southern Senators who voted for the ratification of the Florida treaty knew it, the House of Representa-

[1] Washington, May 22, 1820. Text, Benton's *Thirty Years' View*, i, 15.

[2] *Ibid.*, 16. See also J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, xi, 348. Jackson later explained away this statement. On December 24, 1844, Mr. Governier wrote a letter declaring that the Florida treaty "especially as to boundary has the written approbation of Jackson." (Copy in Jackson MSS., Knoxville Collection, Library of Congress.) Upon reading this statement, Jackson sent Major Lewis to demand a sight of this "written approbation," which was refused on the ground that a similar request from Mr. Adams had been refused. "I am inclined to the belief," wrote Lewis in reporting his failure, "that Mr. Monroe, in his correspondence with you, undertakes to show that no better terms could be had, and that you expressed yourself satisfied with his explanation."—Lewis to Jackson, January 4, 1845, *ibid.*

tives knew it when it appropriated the money necessary to carry the final treaty into effect. John Quincy Adams himself was so intensely conscious of the fact that, in the course of his arguments to induce Spain to accept the concession he used the expression: "That Spain had offered more than we accepted, and that she dare not deny it."[1]

What then is the explanation of the charge so violently made by Jackson against John Quincy Adams, in the letter above quoted?

To those who know the former's disposition, this question answers itself. In 1824, Adams had joined with Clay to prevent the hero of New Orleans from entering the White House, and by that act had become, for all time, the enemy of Andrew Jackson. Henceforth all of his actions were to be interpreted in the terms of that enmity, as well those which had preceded as those which came after that fatal breach. What had before honestly appeared to Jackson a sacrifice of terri-

[1] Benton's *Thirty Years' View*, i, 16–17. In a letter to John Forsyth, dated August 18, 1819, Adams says: "It is too well known, and they will not dare to deny it, that Mr. Onis's last instructions authorized him to concede much more than he did; and those instructions had been prepared by Mr. Pizarro, that after the appointment of the Marquis de Cassa Yrujo to the ministry, they were by him submitted to the King's Council, and with their full sanction, were transmitted to Mr. Onis; that both in relation to the grants of lands in Florida, and to the western boundary, the terms which he obtained were far within the limits of his instructions etc."—Text, *Amer. St. Papers, Lowrie and Franklin, Foreign Relations*, iv, 658.

In his speech of April 3, 1820 (Clay's Works, Reed-McKinley edition, v, 217), Clay says: "We are told by the Secretary of State (J. Q. Adams), in the bold and confident assertion, that Don Onis was authorized to grant us much more, and that Spain dare not deny his instructions."

tory, justifiable in view of certain internal conditions of his country, now equally honestly appeared to him the result of the dark machinations of the "Puritan" who had joined with the "Black-Leg" to defeat the will of the sovereign people and keep Andrew Jackson out of the White House. Whether such a treaty as Jackson here describes had ever been negotiated is at best doubtful.[1] When asked concerning that fact, Mr. Adams replied: "There certainly never had been such a treaty"—and when his questioner[2] insisted that President Jackson had assured him that there was, and that the proof of it was in the Department of State, Adams had hotly declared, that he had no doubt "this was one of G. W. Erving's lies, as there was not a greater liar upon earth."[3] And indeed the existence of such a treaty was never definitely proved by Jackson.[4] He placed such

[1] The Charleston *Mercury* of April 25, 1844, prints a letter from Randolph of Roanoke, scorching J. Q. Adams for his surrender of Texas in the 1819 treaty. He tells of Erving's having placed his proofs in Jackson's hands in 1829 together with the charge that, "Mr. John Quincy Adams had ceded Texas to Spain, in the Florida treaty of the 22d of February, 1819, without an equivalent—and General Jackson expressed his belief, from the proofs, that the statement of Mr. Erving was true." In which opinion Randolph, writing with Erving's proofs before him, fully concurs.

[2] Mr. Johnston. See *Memoirs*, viii, 464.

[3] J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, viii, 464.

[4] It is significant that when John Randolph, in April, 1844, with the Erving papers before him, wrote his indictment of John Quincy Adams for his failure to secure the largest possible concession from Spain in the negotiation of the Florida treaty, he does not claim that Erving had negotiated a treaty, but only that he had informed Adams that Spain was willing to concede the most of Texas and had so instructed Don Onis.

documents in proof of its existence as he could collect, in the hands of Mr. Tazewell of Virginia, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, with the request that he employ them in the Senate "to aid me in obtaining the retrocession" of Texas from Mexico.

Had there been in these documents any real basis for contesting the claim of Mexico to Texas, it seems certain that Tazewell would have taken advantage of it; but, after keeping them for some time, evidently to avoid a rupture with the strenuous Chief Executive, he returned them, saying, "it was now too late to take any step in the business."[1]

To a man of Jackson's temperament, however, it is never too late. He at once adopted the astonishing theory that, as the treaty of 1819 had been accepted by the United States Senate in ignorance of the fact that a better treaty had been offered and secretly rejected, it was therefore "void and of no force."[2] It was made, he declares, under the "J. Q. Adams doctrine, that the constitution is no barrier to ceding our territory." "The treaty of 1803, . . . remains in force as the supreme law of the land, . . . no subsequent treaty with any other nation could free us from

[1] Jackson to Maj. Wm. B. Lewis, September 18, 1843.—Ford MSS., Lenox Library (unpublished).

[2] On August 8, 1850, Sam Houston wrote Colonel Force asking the loan of "a pamphlet, being a memoir relating to the negotiations and Treaty with Spain of 1819 for the acquisition of Florida, . . . containing a report or exposé by Don Louis de Onis to the govr. of Spain of the manner in which he had outwitted the Yankees in the formation of that treaty."—Houston MSS., Library of Congress.

our obligations" under that treaty,[1] and he concludes that Texas is still as much a part of the United States as any other portion of the Louisiana purchase, adding the words which henceforth constantly reappear in his correspondence: "we must regain Texas, peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must."

This, then, and not a wicked desire to add to the power of the Slave States, was the reason why "Jackson was so sharpset for Texas, that, from the first year of his administration, he set his double engines to work, negotiating to buy Texas with one hand, and instigating the people of that province to revolt against Mexico with the other," as Adams tersely expresses it.[2]

[1] Ford MSS., Lenox Library.

The House of Representatives, by giving its consent to bills and appropriations necessary to carry the treaty of 1819 into effect, had also approved the cession of Texas. Hence the contention which Clay, in his resolutions of April 3, 1820 (Clay's Works, Reed-McKinley edition v, 206), had advanced, "that no treaty purporting to alienate any portion [of our territory] . . . is valid without the concurrence of Congress," no longer applied.

[2] J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, xi, 349. Adams is of course a very unsafe witness. He was certainly right, however, about Jackson's eagerness for the purchase of Texas. On August 25, 1829, Martin Van Buren, Jackson's second Secretary of State, sent the following instructions to our minister at Mexico (Charleston *Mercury*, April 16, 1844): "It is the wish of the president that you should, without delay, open a negotiation with the Mexican Government for the purchase of so much of the province of Texas as is hereafter described. He is imbued, by a deep conviction of the real necessity of the proposed acquisition, not only as a guard for our Western frontier and the protection of New Orleans, but also to secure forever to the inhabitants of the valley of the Mississippi the undisputed and undisturbed possession of the navigation of that river." The line desired is described as, "east of the line beginning at the Gulf of Mexico, in the center of the desert, or grand prairie, which lies west of the Rio Nueces." Our desire was to

From the very beginning of Jackson's administration, affairs in Texas had favored the idea of a revolution. American immigration had been in progress for years, encouraged at first by Mexican laws,[1] and then in defiance of them. By the year 1830, Texas was largely occupied by Americans, who retained their slaves in disregard of the Mexican decrees of emancipation, and their lands in defiance of the Mexican laws of confiscation.[2] They made no attempt to conceal their contempt for Mexican authority, and all that was necessary to cause that contempt to be expressed in terms of revolution, was the appearance among them of a leader. This leader, Andrew Jackson was able to furnish, in the person of Sam Houston,[3] ex-Governor of Tennessee.

Houston was a native of Rockbridge County,

---

get the territory east of that line. Through Edward Livingston, in March, 1833, and through John Forsyth in July, 1835, Jackson continued his attempt to purchase Texas.

[1] The Mexicans had encouraged the immigration of Americans into Texas, as the Texan Chargé in London once told Lord Clarendon, in order "to place this hardy and enterprising people as a barrier between their own effeminate population and the various warlike tribes of Indians who infested their frontier and made frequent irruptions into their territories." Terrell to Clarendon, May 5, 1845.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1187.

[2] It must be said, in defense of the American Settlers in Texas, that Mexico had "violated the charters she had granted to Austin's Colonies, on the faith of which the Anglo Americans had emigrated to Texas." See Hamilton to Palmerston, London, November 5, 1840.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 909.

[3] "Jackson proposed anew the purchase of Texas for which he authorized the offer of five millions of dollars, while at the same time Sam Houston went to Texas to kindle an internal insurrection and separate Texas from Mexico."—J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, xi, 365.

Virginia. He was born in 1793, of the sturdy Scotch-Irish stock which has made that region famous, and had inherited the military instincts of his race. His education had been scanty, but, like Jackson himself, he was a man who acted with confidence upon the basis of what he knew. He had served with distinguished heroism under Jackson, during the war of 1812, and, upon his retirement from the army in 1818, had studied law for six months,[1] and then opened an office for the practice of his profession. His success was immediate, and he was soon looked upon as the rising man in the frontier commonwealth of Tennessee. Having occupied in succession the positions of district attorney and adjutant-general of the State, major-general of the militia, and Representative in Congress, Houston found himself in 1827, at the age of thirty-four, Governor of Tennessee by a popular majority of twelve thousand.[2] His prospects of further advancement were most flattering. He was on intimate terms with a President who knew how to reward his friends. A senatorship seemed in store for him, and he might have been pardoned if he had begun to consider the Presidency itself as within the range of his legitimate ambition,[3] had not, just at this point, a mystery which has never been cleared up blighted his prospects, and left him a voluntary exile from civilized society. In

[1] *Life of Sam Houston*, "The only authentic memoir," Anon., 44.
[2] *Ibid.*, 45.
[3] Blaine, *Twenty Years in Congress*, i, 124.

1829, he married a young woman of prominent connections and spotless reputation. In less than three months a separation took place,[1] and the friends of his wife in complete ignorance of the case, charged Houston with all manner of crimes. Houston refused to defend himself. "If my character cannot stand the shock," he said, "let me lose it. The storm will soon sweep by, and time will be my vindicator."[2] Although the masses of Tennessee still stood his loyal and devoted friends, Houston resigned his office and quietly leaving Nashville, made his way to the Arkansas country and took up his residence with the Cherokee Chief, Oolooteka, who years before had adopted him as his son, giving him the name Colonéh, or the Rover.[3] Here he assumed the dress and manners of his brother redmen, sat with them before the councilfire, hunted and played with them, and even yielded to the curse of the tribes, the excessive use of "fire water," being called by them by the tender epithet, "Big Drunk."[4]

It is unnecessary to dwell upon this obscure period of Houston's career.[5] Suffice it to say that, in 1830, just about the time when Mexico was forbidding further settlement of Americans

[1] "Owing to circumstances, about which far more has been conjectured than known by the world." *Memoir*, Anon., 45.

[2] *Ibid.*, 47.

[3] *Ibid.*, 48 and 50.

[4] Bruce's *Sam Houston*, 160.

[5] That Jackson did not completely lose sight of Houston during this period is shown by the fact that in Arkansas the latter received a letter from Jackson, expressing astonishment and grief at the sudden change in his fortunes.—Text, Yoakum's *Hist. of Texas*, i, 307.

in Texas, and attempting to annul existing rights,[1] Houston, the Cherokee, suddenly appeared in Washington, ostensibly seeking a government contract for furnishing Indian supplies.[2]

What operations were conducted under cover of this quest, we cannot tell;[3] but there were certainly many meetings and discussions and plannings, in which the Tennesseean in the White House and the exiled Tennessee Governor took the leading parts. Clay called these meetings the "gathering of midnight conspirators about a failing fire."

In 1832, Houston left Washington for Texas, having in mind a plan to wrest the latter from the weak grasp of Mexico, and annex it to the United States. It is said that President Jackson's parting words were: "Good luck to you in any case; recognition if you succeed"[4]; and Houston is

[1] Art. ii, Law 6th. April, 1830.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1133.

[2] *Memoir*, Anon., 56.

[3] The Jackson MSS. (Knoxville Collection) of the Library of Congress contains a letter from Jackson, dated Washington, May 13, 1832, which gives this account of how Houston thrashed a representative from Ohio: "Houston's beating Stanbury has taken up better than two weeks, and these high dignetories and would be privileged order, has voted their power to punish a citizen for whipping a member of Congress distant from the Congress Hall, and when it was not in Session, by a majority of seventeen. The people will enquire into this act of usurpation, and make these little tyrants who have thus voted feel the power of the people. I inclose for your amusement a well drew carricature of the Scene, taken from the real facts and deposed by Senator Bukner a witness who was present—preserve it." The picture has not been found. See also Niles's *Register*, xliii, 128, for text of Stanbury's Complaint, and Jas. K. Polk's defense of Houston.

[4] Bruce's *Houston*, 76.

recorded as having remarked to a friend, "I am going [to Texas] and in that new country I will make a man of myself again . . . I shall yet be President of a great Republic. I shall bring that nation to the United States."[1]

Of Houston's first days in Texas, little is known. After two months, however, he wrote a suggestive letter to President Jackson:[2] ". . . I am in possession of some information which will doubtless be interesting to you and may be calculated to forward your views, if you should entertain any, touching the acquisition of Texas by the Government of the United States. That such a measure is desired by nineteen-twentieths of the population of the province, I cannot doubt. Mexico is involved in civil war. . . . The Government is essentially despotic. . . . The rulers have not honesty, and the people have not intelligence. . . . My opinion is that Texas, by her members in convention will, by 1st of April, . . . form a State constitution. I expect to be present at the convention, and will apprise you of the course adopted. . . . It is probable that I may make Texas my abiding-place. In adopting this course I will never forget the country of my birth. I will notify from this point the Commissioners of the Indians at Fort Gibson of my success, which will reach you through the War Department."

[1] Alexander Hynds's "General Sam Houston," *Century Magazine*, xxviii, 500–501.

[2] It is dated, Natchitoches, La., February 13, 1833.—Full text Bruce's *Houston*, 81–83.

Almost from the beginning of her independence, Mexico had exhibited signs of those periodical revolutions which have since been the striking characteristic of her history; and Jackson had chosen a most favorable moment for Houston's mission. The authority of Spain in Mexico had practically ceased before the final ratification of the Florida treaty, and the settlement of the boundary lines under that treaty had been made with Mexico as an independent power. During the early days of this revolt from Spain, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna had served against the Revolutionists; but, foreseeing the inevitable end of Spanish power in Mexico, he had become an ardent patriot, and had played a conspicuous part in the establishment of the Empire of Iturbide in 1822.[1] Another vision of the future, however, had soon caused him to lead an insurrection against his new master which culminated in the Emperor's overthrow at Vera Cruz, on the second day of December, 1822, and the adoption of the Republican Constitution of 1824.[2] Even yet, however, Santa Anna's ambition for power had not been gratified, and it was not until he had overthrown two more rivals,[3] that he saw the fulfillment of his destiny to rule, open before him

[1] Iturbide was crowned Emperor, under the title Augustin I, on May 18, 1822. He abdicated on March 19, 1823. For details see Frost's *Pictorial History of Mexico*, 164. For fuller details of Iturbide's career, see Philip Young's *History of Mexico*, 1848 ed., 195–208.

[2] Details of its adoption and character.—Young's *History of Mexico*, 207 *et seq.*

[3] He overthrew Pedraza in 1828 and Bustamente in 1832. For details, see Young's *History of Mexico*, 228, and chapts., ix and x.

in the election of 1833 which made him President of the Mexican Republic. His term of office began on April first, and with it the process of transforming the new Republic of Mexico into a despotism under his absolute control.[1]

With the skill of a born leader of men, he at once attempted to make use of the United States to sustain his precarious position. He caused Mr. Butler, Minister to Mexico, to be approached with the suggestion that the United States make a loan to Mexico. Butler reported the suggestion to Jackson, advising that it be turned "into a bargain for the sale of Texas, or a loan upon mortgage, which they will certainly never redeem."[2]

Jackson, however, knew a cheaper and more direct method of securing Texas, and instructed Secretary Livingston, "to reject . . . the loan, and write forthwith to Butler to bring his negotiation [for purchasing Texas] to a close, for that on the first of April the American colonists in Cochuita are to hold a convention and declare their independence, after which it will be useless to treat with Mexico for Texas."[3]

Upon the appointed day, the Texas Convention

[1] Young in his *History of Mexico*, 238, says that the character of Santa Anna "bears a striking resemblance to that of Lucius Cataline, the Roman Conspirator." For details see *ibid.*, 238–248.

[2] J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, xi, 367.

[3] *Ibid.*, xi, 368.

"This precise knowledge," comments Mr. Adams, "of the intended design of the colonists to declare their independence as early as April, 1833, was suppressed in the document communicated to the House in 1833."

assembled at San Filipe de Austin,[1] and two committees were appointed. One, of which Houston was chairman, was to frame a constitution. This it did, modeling its production upon the lines of our own State constitutions, and providing that no banking system should be allowed under the new government, a provision which has very much the air of what Jackson was then planning for the United States. It is significant that Houston was the only member of the Convention who spoke in favor of this policy.[2]

The second committee, composed of Stephen F. Austin, Wm. H. Wharton, and James B. Miller, was to draft a memorial to the Supreme Government of Mexico, asking that Texas be separated from the State of Coahuila,[3] and organized as a State, upon the basis of her new Constitution.

The drafting of the memorial was an easy task, but the further duty assigned to this committee required heroic courage. They were to bear the Memorial and the new Constitution to Santa Anna, who was already deep in his plans for subverting the Mexican Constitution of 1824

[1] Yoakum's *History of Texas*, i, 311, for details.—Gammel's *Laws of Texas*, i, which prints the Journals of Conventions assembled at San Filipe on October 1, 1832, and on October 16, 1835, as well as of that of November 14, 1835, has preserved no record of this meeting.

[2] Anon., *Memoir*, 68.

[3] In 1824 Mexico had adopted her first Federal Constitution (Text Gammel's *Laws of Texas*, i, 66 *et seq.*).

Texas, at that time, not having enough settlers to justify the establishment of a separate State government, had allowed herself to be annexed to the adjoining province of Coahuila, "until Texas possesses the necessary elements to form a separate State, of herself."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 822. See also, *ibid.*, 1210.

and making himself supreme. To approach him at such a time with such a request, was no pleasant duty, and Colonel Austin's two fellow committeemen, upon slim and transparent excuses, declined the venture. Austin, therefore, made the journey alone, and in his own person suffered all that his more cautious colleagues had feared. Realizing, immediately upon his arrival in Mexico, that his mission would fail, he sent a letter back to his friends in Texas, advising them to organize a State, without waiting to receive Santa Anna's formal denial of their Memorial. This letter was intercepted, and, upon the basis of its contents, Austin was seized as a dangerous conspirator, and secured in solitary confinement,[1] where, without accusation, trial, or hearing of any kind, he remained for many months,[2] and his petition was disregarded.

For two years following this Convention there was no serious outbreak; but all the time American adventurers poured into Texas, prepared to take part in the revolution which they saw to be close at hand.

In 1835, Santa Anna, having concentrated in his own hands the civil and military power of Mexico,[3] issued a decree for the disarmament of Texas.[4] This precipitated the expected revolution;

[1] *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 823. Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 11. Young's *History of Mexico*, 239.

[2] *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1210. Anon., *Memoirs*, 140.

[3] Young's *History of Mexico*, 243. This had been accomplished by the end of the year 1835.—See *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 822.

[4] Anon., *Memoir of Houston*, 72.

and, on October second,[1] there occurred the first engagement, the Lexington of Texas. At Gonzales, on the eastern bank of the Guadalupe, the Texans had placed a four-pounder as a necessary defense against the frequent Indian incursions. In obedience to the disarmament edict, a Mexican detachment was dispatched to capture and remove this field-piece. The Texans rallied for its defense, a skirmish ensued, and from the ranks of the Mexican force issued the first shot of the Texas Revolution, the first overt act coming, as Houston had intended that it should come, from the Mexican invader.[2]

About a month later, in a little frame building at San Filipe de Austin, there assembled the conference which organized the Texas Revolution. Houston, in his buckskin breeches and Mexican blanket,[3] was chosen commander-in-chief of the armies of Texas,[4] a man, as Jackson declared, "who was made by the Almighty, and not by a tailor."[5] A declaration of partial independence was passed,[6] a provisional government was established for Texas,[7] and a Commission was appointed to represent the latter in the United States.[8]

[1] H. H. Bancroft's Works, xiii, 161, note.

[2] Anon., *Memoir*, 72–3.

[3] *Ibid.*, 76. The Journal is printed in Gammel's *Laws of Texas*, i, 507 *et seq.*

[4] Journal under date November 12, Gammel's *Laws of Texas*, i, 533.

[5] Anon., *Memoir*, 76. [6] Text, Gammel's *Laws of Texas*, i, 522.

[7] Text, *Ibid.*, 538–544.

[8] *Ibid.*, 835. They were sent to Washington on December, 7, 1835, with instructions to secure a loan, raise recruits, and discover "whether

Houston now called for volunteers from the United States, to help him to resist the expected attacks of the Mexican usurper,[1] promising large land bounties to such as would serve under him.[2] In reply there was a new rush of American adventurers to Texas; and materials of war began crossing the border.

Meanwhile, Santa Anna was preparing to reduce Texas, and force her back into the Mexican Confederation. In February, he arrived with five or six thousand men[3]: and a running fight began, in which, as Santa Anna was far from his base of supplies, the Texas patriots were at great advantage, though their numbers were vastly inferior to those of the invader.

Then came the historic tragedy of the Alamo. The Alamo was a Franciscan Mission, dating

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that Government would immediately recognize" Texas, "if we declare Independence." Instructions, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Republic of Texas*, vol. ii, part i, 51 *et seq.* In citing *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence* I use the edition prepared by Prof. Geo. P. Garrison and published by the American Historical Association in 1908–11. 3 vols.

[1] On Jan. 10, 1836, Austin, Archer, and Wharton, the Texas agents in the United States, wrote Governor Henry Smith of Texas, "The information from Mexico recd. here [New Orleans] is, that the leading men of the federal party have united with Santana to invade Texas." They also report satisfactory progress in the raising of troops in the United States.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 56.

[2] On February 12, 1836, Austin writes from Nashville: "On my arrival here I enquired of Maj. Miller for the law under which he was offering eight hundred acres of land and twenty-four dollars bounty. He showed me a proclamation of Genl. Houston's which contains those offers."—Austin to Owings, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 69–70.

[3] James Robinson to Stephen F. Austin, January 23, 1836, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 65. S. F. Austin later estimated Santa Anna's whole army at about eight thousand.—*Ibid.*, 127.

from the middle of the eighteenth century. It was strongly built, its walls being three feet thick, and eight feet high, and enclosing an area of about three acres, upon which stood a roofless church of stone, and a few crumbling buildings. Its garrison consisted of some 186[1] men, under Lieutenant-Colonel W. Barrett Travis, and included the famous frontiersman, David Crockett. Houston, anticipating the arrival of a resistless Mexican force, had commanded that the Alamo be blown up and abandoned; but his orders had been unheeded, and the gallant little garrison was soon to pay the terrible price of this neglect. On March, 1, 1836, the Alamo was invested by some four thousand Mexican soldiers,[2] and the final reckoning began.

On the same day, a Texas convention met at Washington on the Brazos and, after brief deliberation, issued the final declaration of absolute independence.[3] The Mexican Government, this document declared, has commanded us to "deliver up our arms, which are essential to our defence—the rightful property of freemen—and formidable

[1] Accounts vary as to numbers. See Anon., *Memoir*, 88, which says 185 men, etc. *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 825, says 186. As the latter statement is made in a carefully written memorial sent to the British Government in order to persuade it to recognize Texan independence, I have followed it. See also *ibid.*, 1211.

[2] This was but half of Santa Anna's army. "He brought," writes the Texas Secretary of State, S. F. Austin, in instructions to a new Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States (*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 129), "a well appointed and disciplined regular army to Texas of about eight thousand men. . . ." See also *ibid.*, iii, 825, and also 1211.

[3] Text, Gammel's *Laws of Texas*, 1063–1067. See also *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1212.

only to tyrannical governments. It has invaded our country. . . . It has . . . incited the merciless savage, . . . to massacre the inhabitants of our defenceless frontiers.

"It has been, during the whole time of our connection with it, the contemptible sport and victim of successive military revolutions, and has continually exhibited every characteristic of a weak, corrupt, and tyrannical government.

"These and other grievances were patiently borne by the people of Texas, until they reached that point at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. We then took up arms in defence of our national constitution. We appealed to our Mexican brethren for assistance; our appeal has been made in vain. . . . We are therefore forced to the melancholy conclusion that the Mexican people have acquiesced in the destruction of their liberty and the substitution therefor of a military government; that they are unfit to be free, and incapable of self-government . . . that our political connection with the Mexican nation has forever ended, and that the people of Texas do now constitute a Free, Sovereign and Independent Republic."

A few days after the signing of this declaration, and while the Convention was still in session, a letter from Colonel Travis was delivered to its president, the last express that ever issued from the doomed fortress of the Alamo.[1] "A blood-red flag waves from the Church of Bexar, and in the

[1] Text, Niles, l., 122.

camp above us . . . the war is one of vengeance against rebels. . . . God and Texas! Victory or death!"

This gallant appeal for help threw the Convention into a panic. One member proposed that they adjourn instantly, and march to the relief of the Alamo. At this suggestion all eyes instinctively turned to Houston, who rose and delivered one of those compelling addresses which were given to him upon such occasions. To adjourn, without forming a constitution, he urged, would be madness, for an army without an organized government behind it would be no better than a band of outlaws.[1] His will prevailed, and the Convention quietly resumed its labors,[2] while Houston, attended only by three or four companions, mounted his war horse and started for Gonzales, where a small band of militia had assembled. His plan was to hasten to the relief of the Alamo with such troops as he could muster. That night they lay on their saddles, stretched upon the broad grassy plain; but dawn found Houston, a little apart from his companions, with his ear to the ground, in the manner of a Cherokee listening for a signal of war. Travis had written that, as long as the Alamo could hold out, signal guns would be fired each day at sunrise. For several days that welcome sound had been heard by the friends of the beleaguered garrison, giving them the assurance

[1] Anon., *Memoir*, 90.

[2] On March 17, 1836, it adopted a constitution.—Text, Gammel's *Laws of Texas*, i, 1069–1085.

that the end had not yet come. But to-day Houston listened in vain.[1] Not the faintest murmur was wafted to him through the calm stillness of the morning. The guns of the Alamo were forever silenced, and her garrison was even then heroically meeting their fate.[2] "Thermopylæ had its messenger of defeat. The Alamo had none," so runs the epitaph carved upon their monument.

Three weeks later, General José Urrea, with the right division of the Mexican army, laid siege to Goliad. Colonel Fannin, the Texas commander, consented to surrender his garrison upon condition that they should be "treated as prisoners of war."[3] The treatment which they actually received, however, is graphically told by a Mexican officer who was present:

"This day, Palm Sunday, March 27, has been to me a day of heartfelt sorrow. At six in the morning, the execution of four hundred and twelve American prisoners was commenced, and continued till eight, when the last of the number was shot. At eleven commenced the operation of burning their bodies. But what an awful scene did the field present, when the prisoners were executed, and fell dead in heaps—and what spectator could view it without horror. They

[1] On March 11, 1836, Sam Houston wrote from Gonzales to J. W. Fanning, Jr.: "Col. Travis intended firing signal guns at three different periods each day until succour should arrive. No signal guns have been fired since Sunday." Full text, Niles, l., 121–122.

[2] Henderson wrote Lord Palmerston (*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 825), "He . . . put every man to the sword."

[3] Text of articles of surrender, Brooks's *Hist. of the Mexican War*, 44–45.

were all young, the eldest not more than thirty, and of fine florid complexions. When the unfortunate youths were brought to the place of death, their lamentations and the appeals which they uttered to heaven in their own language, with extended arms, kneeling or prostrate on the earth, were such as might have caused the very stones to cry out in compassion."[1]

But the blood avenger was at hand. On April 19, 1836, the following letter was dispatched:

"CAMP AT HARRISBURG,
"April 19, 1836.

"TO COLONEL RUSK, IN THE FIELD:

"This morning we are in preparation to meet Santa Anna. It is the only chance of saving Texas. From time to time I have looked for reinforcements in vain. The Convention's adjourning to Harrisburg struck panic throughout the country. Texas could have started at least four thousand men. We will only be about seven hundred to march, besides the camp guard. But we go to conquest. It is wisdom growing out of necessity to meet and fight the enemy now. Every consideration enforces it. The troops are in fine spirits, and now is the time for action. We will use our best efforts to fight the enemy to such advantage as will insure victory, though the odds are greatly against us. I leave the result in the hands of an all-wise God, and I rely confidently

[1] Brooks's *Hist. of the Mexican War*, 45-46. See also *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1211.

upon His providence. My country will do justice to those who serve her. The right for which we fight will be secured, and Texas shall be free.

"SAM HOUSTON,
"*Commander-in-chief.*"[1]

Two days later, Houston, standing bareheaded before his little army, delivered a brief speech: "The only army in Texas is now present. . . . There are none to aid us. There is here but a small force and yet it is all that Texas has."[2] He then gave the watchword, "Remember the Alamo,"[3] and his men, taking up the cry, prepared for the desperate campaign which was to follow.

Less than two months after the massacre of the Alamo, the grizzled warrior in the American White House received a call from the future President, James Buchanan. Jackson was seated in his private office with the map of Texas open before him. He had just finished tracing out, with the accuracy of an expert, the course of the opposing armies, maneuvering for position upon the soil of that new Republic. As Buchanan looked over the map, the General, putting his finger upon San Jacinto, said, "Here is the place. If Sam Houston is worth one bawbee, he will make a stand here, and give them a fight."[4]

A few days after this incident Washington military circles were electrified by the news that

[1] Certified copy from Department of War of Republic of Texas. Reprint in Scotch-Irish in America Society Congress Report of 1890, 160.

[2] Text, Bruce's *Houston*, 119–120.

[3] Anon., *Memoir*, 114.

[4] Bruce's *Houston*, 180.

Santa Anna was taken, and his great army of invasion scattered. For Jackson the news had a double charm. The process of undoing the work of John Quincy Adams, to which he had dedicated himself, was progressing rapidly; while the point which Houston had chosen for his desperate venture against an army of double his strength was San Jacinto, the identical spot upon which his own finger had so confidently rested in the interview with Buchanan.

Even Jackson, however, was not more excited over the success of Houston's campaign than the aged and infirm ex-Vice-President, Aaron Burr, who heard the news of San Jacinto as he lay dying in poverty and disgrace on Staten Island. Houston's career recalled to his mind the days of his own dwelling in the wilderness, and his visions of a vast empire in the Southwest. "There," he exclaimed, "you see? I was right! I was only thirty years too soon! What was treason in me thirty years ago is patriotism now."[1]

Little by little the details of this decisive engagement reached the American capital,[2] and they were of a kind to make the battered old war-horse in the White House rejoice in the hero whom he had trained. Just before the opening of the battle which Houston saw was to decide the fate of Texas, he had called Deaf Smith, his trusty scout, and had sent him with one companion to cut down

[1] Parton's *Jackson*, iii, 319.

[2] Houston's own report to President Burnet, dated April 25, 1836, appears in full in Niles, l., 293–294.

the bridge which offered the only means of escape to either army. "Make the best of your way," he had said, in his habitual tone of kindly friendliness, "to Vince's bridge; cut it down, and burn it up, and come back like eagles, or you will be too late for the day."[1] And just as the first charge was starting, a horseman, flecked with foam from his panting charger, had dashed along the lines of the patriot army, as Houston had arranged that he should do, calling out clearly that all might hear, this death knell to hope of possible escape: "I have cut down Vince's bridge! Now fight for your lives, and remember the Alamo!"[2]

The assault was resistless. The battle lasted only twenty minutes, but in that time a new nation was born into the world. "From the battle of San Jacinto," said Webster in 1842, "the war was at an end." "Mexico may choose to consider Texas as a rebellious province, but the world has been obliged to take a very different view of the matter."[3]

The number of Mexicans killed in this battle was almost as great as Houston's entire army, and a greater number were captured.[4] Early in the action, "the Napoleon of the West,"

[1] Anon., *Memoir*, 126. [2] *Ibid.*, 128.

[3] Lucien B. Chase, *History of the Polk Administration*, 94, note.

[4] Houston's report (Niles, l., 293), says, "The enemy's loss was 630 killed, . . . Wounded 208 . . . . Prisoners 730." "Our aggregate force for the field numbered 783." The Anon. *Memoir*, 143, says that only seven Mexicans were known to have escaped. These figures are confirmed by Van Zandt's letter to Webster, written March 23, 1843 (*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 156). See also *ibid.*, iii, 818 and 1213.

seeing his men falling on every side, mounted his horse, and crying, "D——n these Americans. I believe they will shoot us all," had taken refuge in flight.[1] When the summing-up of prisoners came, and Santa Anna was missing, Houston remarked to some of his men, "You will find the Hero of Tampico, if you find him at all, making his retreat on all fours, and he will be dressed as bad at least as a common soldier."[2]

It was even as Houston predicted. Santa Anna was shortly taken, disguised as a rustic, with a skin-cap, blue cotton pantaloons, and a round jacket: but beneath peeped out the fine linen shirt, and more obtrusive still, and not to be mistaken, were the manners of "El Presidente." He was crawling along through the long grass, intent upon saving, at any cost, a life which in his eyes was of more value than many Mexican armies. On May, 14, 1836, he consented to sign the Treaty of Velasco, which provided that hostilities should cease, prisoners of war be exchanged, indemnity paid to the Texas revolutionists, and Texas, with a boundary extending to the Rio Grande, be acknowledged as a free and independent State.[3] With that treaty, the war practically ceased, as Mexico never again ventured to send an army beyond the Rio Grande.[4]

[1] Anon., *Memoir*, 132.

[2] *Ibid.*, 144. Houston calls him "the self-styled Napoleon of the West." *Ibid.*, 223.

[3] Text, Niles, l., 336. See also G. W. Terrell to Lord Clarendon, May 5, 1845, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1188.

[4] G. P. Garrison's *Texas, a Contest of Civilizations*, 262.

The battle of San Jacinto showed clearly that Mexico could not crush the revolution; and, in a short time, Texas was entirely free from Mexican troops. Her people turned to the task of organizing their new republican government and, on the first Monday in September, 1836, cast an overwhelming vote in favor of Sam Houston, one of three candidates for the presidency of Texas, thus fulfilling, to the letter, the prophecy which Houston had uttered in the dark days of 1832, "I am going [to Texas] . . . and in that new country I will make a man of myself again. . . . I shall yet be the President of a great Republic."

The fulfillment of the further prophecy made upon that occasion, "I shall bring that nation to the United States," constitutes the second stage of the journey to the threshold of the Mexican War.

CHAPTER II

JACKSON AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF TEXAS

1836–1837

NEWS of the victory of San Jacinto reached Washington toward the middle of May, 1836, and public sentiment, which had been profoundly stirred by the story of Houston's heroic courage, and that of his ragged retinue, now burst all bounds. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, through its Chairman, Henry Clay, reported unanimously in favor of the recognition of the independence of Texas, as soon as she should prove herself capable of maintaining a competent civil government.[1] Thereupon, the floodgates of eloquence were opened and men spoke with the voice of prophecy, declaring that the "tide which was swollen by this extraordinary victory will roll on, and no man can tell its final resting place." It was spoken of as the visible awakening of the Anglo-Saxon race of the West. All hailed the new

[1] Clay's resolution reads: "That the independence of Texas ought to be acknowledged by the United States whenever satisfactory information shall be received that it has, in successful operation, a civil government capable of performing the duties and fulfilling the obligations of an independent power."—Jackson's Message of Dec. 21, 1836, Richardson, iii, 266.

Republic, the morning star of the Occident; and Senatorial orators vied with one another in picturing the glories of Houston and San Jacinto.

Of these orators the palm has, by common consent, fallen to Thomas H. Benton of Missouri, who thus described the scene[1]:

"But that combat of San Jacinto! it must forever remain in the catalogue of military miracles. Seven hundred and fifty citizens, miscellaneously armed with rifles, muskets, belt pistols, and knives, under a leader who had never seen service, except as a subaltern, march to attack near double their numbers—march in open day across a clear prairie, to attack upwards of 1200 veterans, the élite of an invading army of 7000, posted in a wood, their flanks secured, front intrenched; and commanded by a general trained in civil wars, victorious in numberless battles; and chief of an empire of which no man becomes chief except as a conqueror. In twenty minutes the position is forced. The combat becomes a carnage. The flowery prairie is stained with blood; the hyacinth is no longer blue, but scarlet; 600 Mexicans are dead; 600 more are prisoners, half wounded; the President General himself is a prisoner; the camp and baggage are all taken; and the loss of the victors, six killed and twenty wounded. Such are the results, and which no European can believe, but those who saw Jackson at New Orleans. Houston is the pupil of Jackson; and he is the first self-made general since the time of Mark Antony, and the King Antigonus,

[1] *Thirty Years' View*, i, 676.

who has taken the General of the Army, and the Head of the government captive in battle. Different from Antony, he has spared the life of his captive, though forfeited by every law, human and divine."

There was an almost unseemly eagerness to recognize the independence of the new Republic at the earliest practicable moment. Calhoun, however, surpassed his colleagues in the Senate in his enthusiasm, not only for the recognition of Texas, but for her speedy annexation, and admission to the Union.[1] His interest was frankly based upon a desire to protect "the peculiar institution" and to serve his section; but there was a force almost equally strong which was operating, in the non-slaveholding States, in favor of recognition and annexation. Almost all of the Texas lands lying between the Nueces and the Sabine, south of the Red River, had been taken up, before the battle of San Jacinto, by American land companies or individual speculators,[2] and mining monopolies in many sections of Texas had been secured by American capital.[3] At the opening of the revolutionary movement, Texas had employed such grants to secure the sinews of war. From her point of

[1] Calhoun's speech, Benton, i, 667.

[2] *E. g.*, John L. Woodbury and John Cameron had been granted a monopoly of all the coal and iron mines of the State for a period of twenty-three years (Yoakum's *History of Texas*, pp. 126 and 784). The largest land grants were those to Austin, Cameron, and Woodbury, that of the latter comprising an area about equal to the three States, Vermont, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire.

[3] For details, see Gouge's *Fiscal Hist. of Texas*. See also *Hist. Teacher's Magazine*, v, 3, pp. 74-77, article by Moses W. Ware.

view this was a wise course, as it not only furnished her with ready money, but served to build up in the American States, both North and South, a party whose financial interests would be advanced by the recognition of her independence, as their lands and interests would increase in value the moment the hand of Mexican despotism was finally withdrawn.

In addition to these privileges on a large scale, the Texas Revolutionary Government had early adopted the policy of granting land bounties to American adventurers in return for military service.[1] These land warrants were often sold in the United States to speculators, who disposed of them at rates which naturally appreciated as the chances of independence, recognition, and annexation to the United States increased. Texan bonds sold in the States, interest-bearing notes were issued, and loans secured by Texan lands were peddled in the financial centers,[2] with the object, frankly avowed in 1837 by the Texan Secretary of the Treasury, of having them "float off to the United States . . . and fall into the hands of bankers and capitalists, thereby increasing . . . interest in our favor."[3] This was a force of which John Quincy Adams, the leader of the anti-Texan hosts, was well aware, a powerful ally of his *bête noire*, the slave power. In a remarkable speech, delivered at Braintree, in

[1] *E. g.*, Act of Dec. 4, 1837, Gouge's *Fiscal History of Texas*, p. 75. Other similar laws are also cited here.

[2] "The swindling operations of the Yazoo land speculations of Mississippi were mere child's play in comparison" with these Texas land speculations, wrote Benjamin Lundy (*War in Texas*, 7).

[3] Gouge's *Fiscal History of Texas*, 85.

September, 1842, after denouncing the annexation activities of the slaveholders, he thus characterizes it: "But there was another more hidden impulse to this extreme solicitude for the recognition of the independence of Texas, working in the free States, quite as ready to assume the mask and cap of liberty, as the slave dealing champions . . . The Texas land and liberty jobbers had spread the contagion of their land jobbing traffic all over the free States throughout the Union. . . . The banks were all plunging into desperate debts . . . Gambling speculation was the madness of the day; and in the widespread ruin which we are now witnessing, Texan bonds and Texan land form no small portion of the fragments from the wreck of money corporations, contributing to their assets two or three cents on the dollar. All these interests furnished vociferous declaimers for the annexation of Texas."[1] Representatives of these interests were ensconced at the capital, employing their talents and their resources in aid of the cause of recognition, toward which Clay's resolutions were felt to be the first step.

On June 1, 1836, those resolutions passed the Senate by unanimous consent, to be followed, a month later, by similar action of the House of Representatives,[2] which "designedly postponed the final action . . . till Monday the fourth [of July] in order that it may be passed and bear date on that memorable day."[3]

[1] Text, Niles, lxiii, 136 *et seq.*

[2] Act of July 4, 1836.

[3] Carson to Burnet, Washington, July 3, 1836, *Texas Diplomatic*

These resolutions, of course, fell far short of actual recognition, providing only, "that the independence of Texas ought to be acknowledged by the United States whenever satisfactory information shall be received that it has, in successful operation, a civil government capable of performing the duties and fulfilling the obligations of an independent power."[1] But they constituted a step in the direction of recognition, and President Jackson at once sent Henry M. Morfit to Texas, to gather information indicating that the condition prescribed already existed.[2] Before Morfit's report was received, however, the flood of abolition petitions which inundated the House of Representatives, in 1836–7, began to turn men's thoughts to the serious internal questions which annexation must inevitably bring with it. Many, hitherto disposed to favor recognition, now began to feel that this meant ultimate and perhaps speedy annexation, and drew back. Having given their consent to Clay's somewhat vague resolution, they now expressed the reasonable fear that President

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Correspondence, i, 101. In writing to President Houston, about four months later (Nov. 28, 1836), Carson says, "Nothing could be more gratifying . . . than the debate in the U. S. Senate upon the resolutions . . . and far from being the least pleasing incidents of the debate was the marked respect with which your name was treated and the eulogies bestowed . . ." *Ibid.*, 146.

[1] See Jackson's Message of Dec. 21, 1836, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iii, 266.

[2] In his message to the Senate, dated Dec. 21, 1836, Jackson reports the results of Morfit's investigations. Text, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iii, 265 *et seq.* See also *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 102.

Jackson, who had long favored annexation, might make some sudden move in that direction, unless some positive check were placed upon him, which suspicion was strengthened by the news that General Gaines had been ordered to place his American troops between the Sabine and the Nueces rivers, in order to prevent the Texas Indians from disturbing our borders.[1] Had they known the full measure of Jackson's interest in the affairs of Texas, they would have been far more alarmed[2]; for Jackson, while acting with caution, for fear of starting a crusade against annexation, and while carefully refraining from any enthusiastic expressions in favor even of recognition, had his fingers on the keyboard, ready to play annexation music

[1] According to Sam P. Carson, temporarily acting as Texas agent in the United States (*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 75), the American neutrality was itself a fraud. On June 1, 1836, he wrote from Nashville: "Seventy men are now ready to leave under Captn. Grundy, who is Prosecuting Att'y for the United States for this District, and has *formal orders* to arrest and prosecute every man who may take up arms in the cause of Texas or in any way violate the neutrality of the United States. He says he will prosecute any man under his command who will take up arms *here*, and he will accompany them to the boundary line of the United States to see that they shall not violate her neutrality and when there, if the boys think proper to step over the line as peaceable emigrants his authority in this Govt. will cease and he thinks it highly probable that he will take a peep at Texas himself. Thus you see how the neutrality of this Govt. is preserved by her civil officers" (*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 93). The maintenance of troops at Nacogdoches was greatly desired by Texas; see *ibid.*, 150 and 175. Their fear was that the Indians would join the Mexican army as soon as it should again invade Texas (*ibid.*, 156 and 165).

[2] On July 3, 1836, Sam P. Carson wrote President Burnet, "I found the President favorably disposed, but fearful of action. . . . It has been suggested to me that he is surrounded by an atmosphere which produces unnecessary fears and apprehensions, or he would act promptly." —*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 100.

at the first favorable moment.[1] He knew that there must ultimately be an open conflict before he could hope, by annexation, to regain the territory "so wickedly alienated" by Adams in 1819; and he knew that careful preparation was necessary if the fight were to have any chance of success. His own days of public service were nearing their close; and to this one great object he had determined to devote his remaining strength.[2] England and France, as he knew, were eager as always to secure new fields for their commerce, and, with this idea in view, had laid their plans for capturing the prize of exclusive trading privileges in Texas,[3] and they, as well as the now militant anti-slavery sentiment

[1] On April 1, 1836, in the private instructions to the special agents of Texas to the United States, George C. Childress and Robert Hamilton, were written these words, significant in view of what we know of Jackson's connection with the Texas Revolution: "If desired, hold the freest and fullest conversation with the President and Cabinet officers. . . . I say *desired*, this you can ascertain by saying to Mr. Forsythe that, if it is desirable by the Govt., you are instructed to hold the fullest and freest conversation." Drawn by Sam P. Carson, Sect'y of State of Texas.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 77.

[2] P. W. Grayson, Texas Agent at Washington, on Aug. 11, 1836, wrote to William H. Jack, the Texas Secretary of State, "There is in my mind no doubt that the present Administration can carry the measure of annexation. General Jackson feels the utmost solicitude for it and we know how much that will count."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 122.

[3] Texas was fully conscious of the advantages which this interest of England and France gave her. The secret instructions given W. H. Wharton, her Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, urge him to cultivate "a close and intimate friendly intercourse with Foreign Ministers at Washington." Suppose, the instructions declare, that the United States should manifest indifference toward our suit for admission into the Union or insist on "unjust and hard terms." We can then "abandon all idea of annexation, and . . . proceed to perfect our institutions and extend our foreign relations where our interests can be best promoted."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 136 and 140.

in the United States,[1] had to be reckoned with.

On October 22, 1836, six months and a day after his victory at San Jacinto, Sam Houston took the oath as first President of independent Texas, delivering an extempore address, as strong and dramatic as his own great soul. At its close he unfastened the sword which he had wielded on that memorable day; and, as he held it aloft in both hands with a farewell grasp, almost convulsive, his rugged audience was visibly moved, and his own handsome countenance displayed intense emotion. After a pause of some moments, he stepped forward with the simple words: "I have worn it with some humble pretensions in defence of my country —and should the danger of my country again call for my services, I expect to resume it, and respond to that call, if needful, with my blood and my life."[2]

At the election which made Houston President, the people of Texas had been asked to vote upon the question of annexation to the United States, and had, with astonishing unanimity, expressed a desire to be "reunited to the great Republican family of the north."[3] Both Houston and Jackson

[1] On Jan. 11, 1837, Minister Wharton wrote from Washington that "the tables of the members . . . groaned with pamphlets written by Abolitionists for the purpose of injuring and calumniating Texas." —*Ibid.*, 176.

[2] Anon., *Memoir*, 179.

[3] *Ibid.*, 178; *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 140. Instructions were at once sent to W. H. Wharton, Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States, to keep two great objects clearly before him: "First, the recognition of the independence of Texas. Second,

heard this cry with sympathetic ears; but almost a decade of civil conflict, political heartburnings, and international intrigue was to pass before it could be answered.

Santa Anna, as Jackson knew, was still in Houston's power, and there appeared to be a chance that through him Mexico might be induced to recognize Texas as independent, thus greatly lessening the complications to which annexation was likely to lead.[1] Jackson, therefore, availed himself of every opportunity to sound the Texas representatives upon the question of their plans for dealing with the captured Dictator.

"On yesterday," writes the Texas Secretary of State,[2] "I dined, by invitation, with the President. I had entered the palace (as it is called) but a short time before the following conversation took place between him and myself:

"PRESIDENT. 'Is it true, Mr. Carson, that your Government has sent Santa Anna back to Mexico . . .?'

"CARSON. 'A letter has been received, sir, which states that he was to sail on the day the letter was dated, or the next day, for Mexico, with Vice-President Zavala and Mr.

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the annexation of this country to the United States."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 127.

[1] On July 2, 1836, S. F. Austin wrote, "I have seen Santa Anna—he will write a letter to President Jackson requesting his mediation to terminate the war on the basis of a recognition of Texas independence" (*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 100). See also Wharton to Austin, Jan. 15, 1837 (*ibid.*, i, 176).

[2] Carson to Burnet, Washington, July 3, 1836. *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 102.

Hardeman as ministers, to negotiate the final recognition of our Independence, upon a basis arranged by the Government of Texas and Santa Anna.'[1]

"PRESIDENT. 'Then I tell you, Sir, if he ever sets foot on Mexican ground, your Government may whistle; he, Sir, will give you trouble, if he escapes, which you dream not of.'

"CARSON. 'He will be on board of one of our armed vessels. . . .'

"PRESIDENT. 'I tell you, Sir, if that vessel goes within range of the guns of the battery of Vera Cruz, they will capture the vessel . . .'

"CARSON. 'Then, Sir, I tell you . . . that it will not be six months till an army composed of your own countrymen in part, and of Texans, will be at the walls of Mexico, and ample revenge shall be had.'

"PRESIDENT. 'Where is your means, Sir, to carry on an offensive war against Mexico?'

"CARSON. 'In the enthusiasms of the American people.' "

Only a few weeks after this interview, Jackson's confidential friend, William B. Lewis, wrote to Houston an elaborate letter,[2] indicating Jackson's desire with reference to Santa Anna. It reads thus:

[1] A copy of the treaty between Texas and Santa Anna, together with a copy of Santa Anna's letter, had already been sent to Jackson.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 105-107.

[2] Ford MSS., Lenox Library, New York.

"WASHINGTON, 27th Octo: 1836.

"MY DEAR SIR:

"In my last letter to you I remarked that possibly a state of things might arise which would make it sound policy to liberate Santa Anna. It strikes me that the period has arrived, and that such a state of things do now exist. Bustamenta, the enemy of the President of Mexico, it is said, has returned to that country, and will endeavor, no doubt, to place himself at the head of the Government, if he is not already at its head. Now, Sir, under such circumstances, would it not be to the interest of Texas to turn Santa Anna loose upon those gentry who have possessed themselves of his place and the power of the Government to make war upon Texas? It strikes me so at least. If he were to return to Mexico, I have no doubt he would give them enough to do at home, instead of collecting and marching their forces against you. You might enter into another arrangement with him and proffer your services to assist, if required, in restoring him to the station he occupied before his capture, provided he would guarantee the independence of Texas so far as depended upon him and Mexico—— Were you to liberate him under such circumstances and with such an understanding, I have no doubt he would be true to his engagements, and become the warm and sincere friend of Texas, and her President Elect. But,

it might be asked, what could be expected of him if liberated, as he must be powerless. Suppose such to be the fact; in answer it might be said, if he were unable to render Texas any services, neither could he do her any harm. But if his friends and followers have not abandoned him, in consequence of his fallen fortunes, and it is likely they have not, he might still be a match for his enemies, and by compelling them to take care of themselves at home, relieve you from the disasters of another campaign, the coming winter. Others ~~would~~ might suggest (and no doubt think so too) that if he were again entrusted with power he ~~might~~ would disregard his promises to Texas, and endeavour to retrieve his lost honors, by again invading her territory and making war upon her citizens. If he were to attempt this, after stipulating to guarantee her independence, as a condition of his liberation, I have no doubt your independence would be acknowledged forthwith by foreign nations, and ample means furnished you severely to punish such perfidious conduct. However much the present Mexican authorities may object to the arrangement entered into between your Government and Santa Anna, in consequence of his being a prisoner, he could not deny its authenticity, and especially if sanctioned and confirmed after he was set at liberty.

"These, my friend, are not only my views

upon this all important subject, but they are the views and opinions of one who, I know, has great weight with you. The President, in a conversation with a friend last evening, expressed the same opinions, as to the policy of liberating Santa Anna, and permitting him to return to Mexico without delay. He said he had no doubt but it was the best thing the Government of Texas could do, as it would give the Mexicans employment at home, instead of making war upon their neighbours.[1]

"If liberated I should think it would be best for him to go to Vera Cruz, as he probably has more friends there than in any other part of Mexico; but he, of course, would be the best judge of that himself.

"Garartiza [Gorostiza], the Mexican minister, has demanded his passports, and will, I suppose, soon leave the U. States if he has not already done so. The cause of his departure was the refusal, on the part of this Government, to recall the troops stationed at Nacogdoches. The necessity of their remaining there for the protection of our frontier settlements is left entirely to the discretion of the commanding officer, who now is Colo. Arbuckle. He has instructions, I believe, to withdraw them if in his opinion the situation of things do not make it necessary for them longer to continue at that post, but not otherwise.

[1] The underscoring and erasures appear in the MS.

"I think it more than probable that the existing authorities of Mexico are endeavoring to get England to interfere in her behalf. Possibly she may do so, in consequence of the large sums of money owing by Mexico to English subjects, but not to the extent of involving herself in a war with the U. States. This is another reason why it might be to the interest of Texas to set Santa Anna at liberty. Were he again at the head of the Mexican Government and the friend of Texas, he would ask no such interference, and there could be no pretext for that Government to take any part in the matter. It strikes me, if you Texans have any diplomatic tact, that by taking advantage of the present state of things in Mexico, you might avert, for many years at least to come, the calamities of a war with that country, if not obtain its acknowledgment of your independence. I think both might be effected.

"I have got to the bottom of my paper and must conclude by subscribing myself truly and sincerely,

"Your friend,

WM. B. LEWIS.

"Genl Houston,
President of Texas.

"N. B. The foregoing was written at the suggestion of the President, and was read to him before it was mailed. Its contents met his

entire approbation, and he expressed a wish that it should be forwarded without delay.

WM. B. LEWIS."

The release of Santa Anna soon followed, but his captivity had greatly weakened his influence in Mexico: and, as a President shorn of his power, he set foot upon his native soil. Even his nominal authority was soon taken from him by the election of his old rival, Anastasio Bustamente, as President of Mexico. Truly, it looked as if Santa Anna's power for good or evil was forever gone.[1]

Meanwhile, Morfit, whom Jackson had sent to Texas to gather information indicating that she now possessed "a civil government capable of . . . fulfilling the obligations of an independent power," had made his report[2]; and, in a special message,[3] dated December 21, 1836, Jackson laid that information before the Senate, clearly intimating that the evidence was not such as to cause him to con-

[1] But Santa Anna's genius for leadership was great and, in October, 1841, having forced the resignation of Bustamente, he was again chosen President, and shortly afterward, by the new constitution adopted June 12, 1843, he became practically Dictator. In 1845 he was again exiled, but again, by the connivance of the United States, he was restored, and led the armies of his country against the troops of the United States. After Scott occupied Mexico, in September, 1847, he again retired, but was recalled by a revolt of the army and again made President and practical Dictator, in 1853. In August, 1855, this child of fortune was again exiled, and this time it was "to St. Helena," for he never regained control of his country.

[2] On Dec. 28, 1836, Wharton wrote to the Texas Secretary of State, Austin, "the report will do us no material disservice."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 160.

[3] Text, Richardson, iii, 265–9. Text of Morfit's Report, Senate Documents, 24th Congress, 2d Session, i, No. 20, pp. 5–36.

sider that the hour for recognition had yet arrived. "Were there nothing peculiar in the relative situation of the United States and Texas," he declared, "our acknowledgment of its independence at such a crisis could scarcely be regarded as consistent with that prudent reserve with which we have heretofore held ourselves bound to treat all similar questions. But there are circumstances in the relations of the two countries which require us to act on this occasion with even more than our wonted caution. . . .

"The title of Texas to the territory she claims is identified with her independence; she asks us to acknowledge that title to the territory, with an avowed design to treat immediately of its transfer to the United States. It becomes us to beware of a too early movement, as it might subject us, however unjustly, to the imputation of seeking to establish the claim of our neighbors to a territory, with a view to its subsequent acquisition by ourselves. Prudence, therefore, seems to dictate that we should stand aloof, and maintain our present attitude, if not until Mexico itself, or one of the great foreign powers, shall recognize the independence of the new government, at least until the lapse of time, or the course of events, shall have proved, beyond cavil or dispute, the ability of the people of that country to maintain their separate sovereignty, and to uphold the government constituted by them."

Jackson might have added that he had the best of reasons for believing that Texas was in no con-

dition to maintain her independent position, for, on November 20th, Houston had written him a confidential letter[1] containing these words: "My great desire is that our country Texas shall be annexed to the United States and on a footing of Justice and reciprocity to the parties. It is policy to hold out the idea (and few there are who know the contrary) that we are very able to sustain ourselves against any power, . . . yet I am free to say to you that we cannot do it. . . . I look to you, as the friend and patron of my youth, and the benefactor of mankind, to interpose in our behalf and save us."

The message therefore was but part of Jackson's method of responding to Houston's prayer, and its tone should have put his enemies on their guard. When Andrew Jackson began talking of "prudent reserve," and "our wonted caution," it was time for his political opponents to prepare for some extraordinary activity. But his message appears to have completely deceived them all.[2] His words were received with breathless astonishment by the Anti-Annexationists, and with exaltation by the Abolitionists. They had felt so certain that he was bent upon annexation at any cost, that they could find no voice, even to accuse him of inconsistency.[3]

[1] *Bulletin of the University of Texas*, No. 165, p. 24, quoted from Austin's *Album of 1836*, p. 51.

[2] "The message (special) of General Jackson has been received and we are at a loss in Texas to know what course matters will take, or in what attitude we are to stand to the U. States or the world generally. We hope a pleasant one, when our claims to m—— [illegible] at least are acted upon." Sam Houston to Mrs. Katherine D. Morgan, Columbia, Texas. Houston MSS., Library of Congress.

[3] See John Quincy Adams's *Memoirs*, ix, 330.

Even the Texan Minister was astonished, and sent a dispatch to his Government, declaring that the message "has surprised every body. It has pleased no party 'en masse' except perhaps the Abolitionists. . . . Some say it was the work of Mr. Van Buren for the purpose of transferring the responsibility from the Administration to Congress, and that the President will recognize immediately, if Congress recommends it by a majority of even one."[1]

Had the Texan Minister been possessed of a veritable spirit of prophecy, he could not have foretold the future actions of General Jackson more exactly than he did in this letter. His views were confirmed a few days later by Jackson himself. I called on the President at his request, Wharton reports, in a dispatch to his Government,[2] and he told me, confidentially, "that the object of his message was to obtain the concurrent action of Congress on the subject . . . , and would immediately concur if a majority recommended it [*i. e.*, the recognition of Texas] . . . Again and again . . . ," he adds, "Genl. Jackson impressed upon me the importance of the most sacred confidence in regard to our interview. . . ."

Had the exultant Abolitionists suspected the deep purpose underlying Jackson's unexpected moderation and reserve, their course would have been different; but, as it was, they were soothed

[1] Wharton to Austin, Dec. 28, 1836.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 158.

[2] *Ibid.*, 171.

into a dangerous complacency. In complete harmony with what they believed to be the President's wishes, they rejected several bills providing for the immediate recognition of Texas[1]; but Wharton significantly wrote: "I am more deceived in him [Jackson] than ever I was in mortal man, if he does not . . . have us formally recognized before he quits the President's chair."[2]

A few days later the Minister reports, "General Jackson says that Texas must claim the Californias on the Pacific, in order to paralyze the opposition of the North and East to annexation. . . . He is very earnest and anxious on this point of claiming the Californias, and says we must not consent to less. This in strict confidence."[3]

As Wharton was writing these words, news was brought him that, "the Committee on Foreign

[1] *E. g.*, Walker's joint resolution of Jan. 11, 1837.

[2] *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 182. See *ibid.*, 181, for fate of one of the bills for recognition; *ibid.*, 186, for another.

[3] Wharton to Rusk, Jan. 24, 1837, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 193–194. Wharton told Houston that he had carefully investigated the cause of the reluctance of Congress to act in the matter of recognition. "It proceeds," he says, "from the Van Buren party. They are afraid that the subject of annexation will be pressed immediately after recognition; that annexation or no annexation will be made the test of the elections for Congress during the ensuing summer; that the North will be opposed to, the South in favor of annexation, and that Mr. Van Buren [President-elect] will of course have the support of either the South or North in mass, according as he favors or opposes annexation." This letter is especially significant in view of Van Buren's subsequent efforts to keep the question from becoming the predominant issue in the Campaign of 1844. Wharton to Houston, Feb. 2, 1837, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 179–180. Texas followed this advice to the letter. The Texas Congress soon passed a resolution, "extending her jurisdiction over the Californias to the Pacific."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 541.

Affairs of the lower house [had] reported a resolution, recommending the immediate recognition of the independence of Texas, also an appropriation for a Minister to Texas.[1] The report," he adds, "will certainly be concurred in. . . . Glory to God in the highest!"

But again the opposition was too strong, and the Ministers again appealed to Jackson:

> "The eyes, the hearts and the hopes of our whole country are directed to you more than to all the people of the United States put together. . . . We implore that we may not be disappointed."[2]

They were not disappointed; but Jackson accomplished the recognition of Texas in his own peculiar way.[3] As the hour for the adjournment of Congress and for the final retirement of President Jackson approached, the opposition to recognition, now confidently counting him as one of their number, laid a trap for their own feet. Deeming it wise to

[1] *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 194.

[2] Text of the appeal to Jackson, dated Feb. 8, 1837. See *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 196–197.

[3] Jackson, as Miss Rather has concisely pointed out (Recognition of the Republic of Texas by the United States. Bulletin of the University of Texas, No. 165, p. 247), had been hoping that recognition would be made easier by one of three eventualities: (1) England or some other power might lead the way in recognizing Texas. (2) A treaty might be arranged, through Santa Anna, between Texas and Mexico. (3) A treaty of concession to the United States from Mexico might be arranged through Santa Anna.

All these having failed him, however, Jackson proceeded to secure the recognition of Texas by the United States, in the manner described in the text.

make provision for any contingency which might arise during recess, they allowed a clause to be inserted in a civil appropriation bill, providing a suitable salary for a diplomatic agent to Texas, to be used whenever the President should consider that Texas had given sufficient evidence of her power to maintain her independence.[1]

No sooner was this vote announced than the watchful Texan Ministers sent an appeal to the President imploring him, "in the name of our country and by the friendship of our President, . . . to close your brilliant career by admitting Texas, at once, into the family of nations."[2] Jackson unhesitatingly took the step which the House had refused to take, and recognized the independence of Texas, by sending to the Senate the nomination of a Minister to that Republic.

This was the last official act of Andrew Jackson, as President of the United States,[3] and it clearly

[1] Act of March 3, 1837, 5 U. S. Statutes, 170. On Feb. 18, 1837, the House of Representatives, under the security which Jackson's messages had given them, had passed a resolution, "that the Committee of Ways and Means be directed to provide, in the bill for the civil and diplomatic expenses of the Government, a salary and outfit for such public agent as the President may determine to send to Texas." Journal, House of Representatives, 2d Session, 24th Congress, 457. The resulting bill, in its final form, was approved by the President, March 3, 1837. Journal of the House of Representatives, 2d Session, 24th Congress, p. 610.

[2] Wharton and Hunt to Jackson, March 3, 1837. Text of appeal, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 201.

[3] Anon., *Memoir*, 185. "Mexico," wrote Catlett, Secretary of the Texas Legation at Washington, "had half a mind to declare war against the United States, when she heard of the recognition of our independence, but the prevailing opinion here is that she will remain content with the protest she has already uttered."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 217.

shows that his character had not changed since the days when he defied his marching orders by the capture of St. Marks and Pensacola. He retired to his estate of the Hermitage, a private citizen, but, with the tenacity of purpose which had made him the dominant figure in national politics for over a decade, he continued to watch over the annexation project, to the successful conclusion of which he had dedicated his declining years.

CHAPTER III

JACKSON, HOUSTON, TYLER, AND THE ANNEXATION OF TEXAS

1837–1845

IN his inaugural address, President Sam Houston clearly interpreted the meaning of the first elections under the Texan Constitution. "The important subject of annexation to the United States," he declared, "was submitted to the consideration of the people. . . . They have, with a unanimity unparalleled, declared that they will be re-united to the Great Republican Family of the North. The appeal is made by a willing people. Will our friends disregard it?"[1]

At his command, the Texan Minister at Washington presented the request for annexation to our new President, Martin Van Buren, early in August, 1837[2]: but the suggestion excited no favorable response in the heart of this distinguished member

[1] Anon., *Memoir of Houston*, 178.

[2] *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 258. Hunt's instructions, dated June 26, 1837, direct him to propose annexation without delay. "The longer it is delayed, the more we will be trammelled by foreign obligations and treaties, which will obviously tend to increase the difficulties. We are without credit abroad, and our resources are exhausted at home. . . . Annexation is the remedy, and it is expected that you will exert yourself to effect it."—*Ibid.*, i, 233.

of the "Albany Regency," restrained as he was by our treaty of amnesty and commerce with Mexico.[1] It however stirred the two sections of the American nation to their profoundest depths. The North, fully alive to the fact that annexation would mean from ten to twenty new pro-slavery votes in Congress, hastened to declare its utter abhorrence of the idea, while several Southern States were quite as outspoken in its favor. Clay declared that, while he was inclined to favor the ultimate annexation of Texas, he felt that the "time had not yet arrived when the question could be taken up in Congress with any probability of success."[2] Webster strongly opposed the idea, "but we derive from his violent opposition," wrote the Texan Minister, "our most important benefit—the warm and unanimous support of the whole South."[3] John Quincy Adams, now winning his title of "Old Man Eloquent" in the House of Representatives, strove to expose what he described as the duplicity and perfidy of Jackson's secret connection with the Texas Revolution, which charge, made with all the skill and force of Adams's virile personality, had the effect of quieting the annexation clamor for the moment.[4]

[1] Van Buren's natural inclination was toward annexation. On June 6, 1837, the Texan Minister, Wharton, had written to Secretary Austin of Texas, "It is said by many and not without foundation that Mr. Van Buren himself is anxious to have the glory of annexing Texas under his Administration."—*Ibid.*, 170.

[2] Hunt to Iron, Jan. 31, 1838.—*Ibid.*, 287.

[3] Hunt to Iron, undated.—*Ibid.*, 239.

[4] Niles, lxiii, 137. In a speech here requoted, John Quincy Adams declared, "I was compelled to deliver, in the scanty fragments, often

Houston, meanwhile, had adopted the most obvious means of bringing pressure to bear upon the American nation. "Lower your import duties," he said to the Texan Legislature, "make commerce attractive to England and France, and the nation which has scorned us must reflect and reconsider her course." This suggestion was adopted, and, in consequence, England began exerting her influence to induce Mexico to acknowledge the independence of Texas; while France, lured on by the same clever policy, began to see visions of another American Empire, Mexico and Texas combined under the beneficent rule of a French prince, who would hold his power in trust for his native country.

Mexico, seeing in this change of attitude on the part of these two great nations a chance of preventing the annexation of Texas to the United States, made covert hints that she would consent to admit the independence of Texas upon the condition that she would preserve a distinct nationality. It was even suggested in the Mexican Congress that it might be wise "to dispose of Texas, . . . to the British Government, . . . in order to pay off the British debt."[1]

In order still further to attach England to his cause, Henderson, the Texan Agent in London,

interrupted, of the morning hour, from day to day, from the 16th of June to the 7th of July, 1838," a speech to "expose and lay bare the double dealing and perfidious policy of the Federal Administration towards Mexico." See also J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, x, 21 to 29, for his report of each day's speeches.

[1] *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 211–213.

wrote to Iron, the Secretary of State, "Would it not . . . be advisable for the Government of Texas to notify me, officially, that she is no longer desirous of annexing herself to the United States?"[1] In reply to which, Iron dispatched a note[2] declaring, "The question of annexation may be regarded as settled forever. Our Minister at Washington is instructed to withdraw the proposition. . . . This cause cannot therefore continue to operate against us in Europe."[3]

Just at this critical moment, Sam Houston's term of office came to an end.[4] The affairs of Texas passed into the hands of the reckless and incompetent President, Lamar, an open opponent of the idea of annexation,[5] and Houston was compelled to watch the dangerous drifting of the bark which he had launched with such infinite courage and patience.[6]

[1] Henderson to Iron, Dec. 22, 1837.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 835.

[2] Iron to Henderson, June 6, 1838.—*Ibid.*, 863.

[3] Jones was directed, on Oct. 12, 1838, to withdraw the proposition of annexation. Iron to Henderson, and Jones to Iron, Oct. 13, 1838.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 864, and i, 348.

Van Buren informed Congress, on June 2, 1838, that the annexation proposition had been finally disposed of.—J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, x, 6.

[4] Dec., 1838.

[5] "I have never been able myself to perceive the policy of the desired connection, or to discover in it any advantage, either civil, political, or commercial, which could possibly result to Texas."—Lamar's Inaugural Address, Dec. 9, 1838, quoted in H. Yoakum's *Hist. of Texas*, ii, 252.

[6] To this period belongs the disastrous Santa Fé Expedition. For its history, see *Narrative of the Santa Fé Expedition*, by Geo. Wilkins Kendall. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1844, 2 vols. See also Roberts to Bee, June 21, 1841, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 91 and 92, for plans, etc., and Anon., *Memoir*, 197.

For description of treatment of the prisoners and the American intervention in their behalf, see *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 520, 546, 548, 550.

With reference to Texas, however, his clever diplomacy had already done its work, and France and England soon recognized the independence of the new Republic.[1] These two nations next turned their attention to the task of arranging an armistice with Mexico,[2] in order that their trade with Texas might flourish undisturbed.

That task was rendered comparatively easy by the internal condition of Mexico. Santa Anna had regained control of the State,[3] in October, 1841, by forcing the resignation of Bustamente,[4] and, for the moment, it suited his plans to grant Texas the armistice.[5]

[1] France, by a treaty concluded Sept. 25, 1839, and ratified Feb. 14, 1840. England, by a similar treaty signed Nov. 13, 1840, by a convention for British mediation between Texas and Mexico, signed Nov. 14, 1840, and by a treaty for suppressing the African slave trade, signed Nov. 16, 1840. Ratifications of these treaties were exchanged June 28, 1842. *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 971. For references to texts of these treaties, see *ibid.*, 1270 (France), and 911 (England).

[2] The *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, vol. iii, shows a large number of dispatches, describing the efforts put forth for this purpose, and the difficulties encountered. *E. g.* Smith to Jones, Oct. 17, 1842. *Ibid.*, 1026–1027, 1092, etc.

[3] On Christmas Day, 1839, A. S. Wright wrote Wm. Bryan, from the City of Mexico, "Santa Anna, to the joy of strangers and to the regret of fools, was supposed to have quit the world and gone to Texas or some other good world, where he would have received his just reward for all his rascalities, . . . But . . . he is soon expected at this city as General Dictator of Ways and Means, and [will] take the Government into his own hands, and then like the Tripple Headed Potentate of Hell . . . grasp to himself, regardless of shame or pity, the little wealth of good still remaining to this almost sinking country."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 519.

[4] Young's *Mexico*, 283–299.

[5] Anon., *Memoir*, 233. On May 27, 1843, Percy W. Doyle, British Chargé in Mexico, wrote to Capt. Charles Elliot, "His Excellency [Santa Anna] has authorized me to acquaint you for the information

Before this concession was announced, Houston was again presiding over the destinies of Texas, having, on December 13, 1841, entered upon his second Presidential term.[1]

Great political changes had taken place in the United States during the period of his retirement. The Whig party, so long hampered by the presence of the old Democratic hero, Andrew Jackson, in the Executive Mansion, had borrowed the tactics of their opponents and nominated a soldier, William Henry Harrison, as their candidate for the Presidency in 1840. To hold the South, they had selected, for the second place on their ticket, John Tyler of Virginia, a Calhoun Democrat, whom circumstances had lately driven into the Whig ranks. The combination had proved excellent for campaign purposes, and the ticket had swept the country.[2] But in the midst of the Whig rejoicing over this, their first national triumph, had come the first national mourning for a chief executive. One month after

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of General Houston, that He will agree to an armistice; and He told me He would at once give orders for a total cessation of hostilities."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1091; also 1092, 1093, and 1095. Also Elliot to Jones, *ibid.*, 1112.

[1] Five days after Houston's inauguration, John Quincy Adams confided to his diary the discovery of "indications of a design to revive the project of annexing Texas to the United States. . . . There is apparently in this movement," he adds, "a concert of long standing between Andrew Jackson, Samuel Houston, recently elected for the second time President of Texas, and Santa Anna, now reinstated as President of the Mexican Confederation."—J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, xi, 41.

[2] The electoral vote of Harrison and Tyler was 234 out of a total of 294.

his inauguration, death put an end to the career of Harrison; and the astonished Whigs found themselves with John Tyler, their "Democratic-decoy," at the head of their government. They had played the game of politics too cleverly, and had brought about the very condition which the twelfth amendment to the Constitution had been designed to prevent.

It was not long before the Cabinet realized the absurdity of Whig Secretaries advising a Democratic President, and began to send in their resignations. Webster felt compelled to remain at the head of the State Department, until the conclusion of the treaty settling the northeastern boundary of Maine, which he was negotiating with the British representative, Ashburton; but, soon after its conclusion, he followed his fellow-Whigs into retirement.

With his withdrawal, the active campaign for the reannexation of Texas began again. Andrew Jackson was now a private citizen, but he was still intent upon restoring Texas to the American nation. His influence with the Democratic party was still unshaken, and with President Tyler, as the Texan Chargé at Washington exultingly wrote, "it is paramount."[1] A few months after Webster's retirement, Jackson dispatched to his faithful friend, William B. Lewis, a letter[2] which

[1] Van Zandt to Jones, March 13, 1843.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 137.

[2] Andrew Jackson to Major Wm. B. Lewis, Hermitage, Sept. 18, 1843. Ford MSS., Lenox Library.

declares: "Texas, as I am advised, is very willing now, to come into the Union. I could obtain the cession in a week. We have a right now, Texas being independent, having been acknowledged by us, Great Britain and France, to treat with her as an Independent Nation, and annex her to this Union. The future safety of our country and its best interests demand it. . . . We must regain Texas, peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must."[1] England, he says, intends "to claim Oregon, and obtain an undue influence in Texas." By forming a treaty offensive and defensive with Texas, she might secure the right "to land and organize any army she might require in her territory." She might even "possess herself of New Orleans and reduce all our fortifications and, having command of the ocean, could keep the country a long time, and it might cost oceans of blood and millions of money to regain it."

It is evident that in this letter, to a confidential friend and marked "Private," the hero of New Orleans is speaking his whole heart. It is not the letter of a slaveholder, scheming to advance the interests of the slave section; but the impassioned utterance of a patriot, seeking to present reasons for reannexing a region which he believed had been "corruptly ceded."

In President Tyler, the policy of reannexation urged in this letter found an eager advocate. To him reannexation seemed the course which every

[1] These words are deeply underscored in the MS., which is in Jackson's own hand.

statesman must of necessity regard as right and proper. In selecting a successor to Daniel Webster in the State Department, he chose Judge Abel P. Upshur, a man whose views upon this question were in complete harmony with his own. Upshur was thoroughly acquainted with Jackson's ideas concerning the corrupt cession of Texas in the Florida treaty, having himself examined the papers of George W. Erving at Jackson's suggestion[1]; and, even before his appointment had been confirmed by the Senate,[2] he had reopened negotiations looking toward the annexation of Texas, by urging Houston to renew his application for the admission of Texas into the American Union.[3]

With wise caution, however, Tyler refrained from the discussion of the question of annexation in his message to Congress; and Jackson, learning these facts, wrote to Major Lewis[4]: "The course

[1] "I am pleased to be informed," wrote Jackson to Major Lewis on Oct. 31, 1843, "that Judge Upshur has seen the Irwin [Erving] papers and has searched the State Department for the correspondence between J. Q. Adams and Mr. Irwin [Erving]. He has no doubt found in them the hostility of Mr. Adams to the rising greatness of the South and West."—Ford MSS., Lenox Library.

[2] Upshur served as Secretary of State *ad interim* from June 24, 1843, to July 23, 1843. He was commissioned Secretary of State on July 24, 1843, during a recess of the Senate, and was confirmed and recommissioned on Jan. 2, 1844.

[3] On June 11, 1842, the Texas Chargé at Washington had sent home a dispatch declaring that the President had told him "that he was anxious for it [annexation], and wished most sincerely he was able to conclude it at once. . . . The only fear," he adds, "is its non-confirmation by the Senate, two thirds of that body being necessary to consummate a treaty. . . . The President would act in a moment, if the Senate would assent."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, i, 567, 568, 633.

[4] Jackson to W. B. Lewis, Dec. 15, 1843. Ford MSS., Lenox Library.

pursued by the President, in not incorporating in his message the subject of the annexation of Texas, . . . shows both prudence and wisdom. The proper course is to enter into a treaty for it, and his first action upon it his presenting it to the Senate. Any other course would bring down upon him the abuse of J. Q. Adams and associates, and perhaps injure the negotiation. Houston will not oppose, as I believe, the annexation; he dare not . . . ; did I believe otherwise I would write him on this subject, but I am convinced I could obtain it in a day. . . . To prevent Great Britain from getting it, or an influence over it, we must have it, peaceably if we can, but forcibly if we must."

Many of the leaders at Washington, however, did not share Jackson's belief that "Houston will not oppose . . . annexation." His conduct, upon the surface, indeed, seemed to point in exactly the opposite direction. On July 6, 1843, he had notified Van Zandt, Texan Chargé at Washington, that "the United States having taken no definite action in this matter, and there now being an increased prospect of an adjustment of our difficulties with Mexico, the President deems it advisable to take no further action at present in reference to annexation, but has decided to await the issue of events now in progress."[1] Van Zandt was evidently expected to encourage the impression that Texas, having been "spurned from the embrace of the United States,"[2] was now beginning to

[1] Text of instructions, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 195.
[2] Anon., *Memoir*, 234.

depend upon the friendship of France and England. That this was not really Houston's plan, however, is shown by the remainder of Van Zandt's instructions, which plainly declare that he is aiming to "simplify the question of the annexation of Texas to the United States," by first securing the "acknowledgment of our independence" by Mexico. But it was so interpreted, as Houston had intended that it should be, and the Washington Administration was alarmed. Secretary Upshur at once sought from Van Zandt[1] an explanation of his government's unexpected attitude, an understanding was quickly reached, and the Chargé wrote to his government that the question of annexation had taken encouraging form. The issue, he said, is this, "Are we ready to negotiate a treaty of annexation or not? . . . The possibility of England's . . . securing an undue influence in Texas, and thereby monopolizing her growing trade, seems to have touched the secret springs of interest, so fondly cherished by northern manufacturers, and presented the question in a form hitherto unheeded. The West are intent on the occupation of Oregon, in order to wrest it from the grasping power of Great Britain. It is believed that the interest of the two questions of the annexation of Texas, and the occupation of Oregon, can be combined, securing for the latter the South and Southwestern votes, and for the former some northern and the entire western vote."[2]

[1] For Van Zandt's account of the interviews with Upshur, see *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 208–209.

[2] Van Zandt to Jones, Oct. 16, 1843.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 221–222.

It was indeed true. The annexation fever, destined to sweep the country in the campaign of 1844, had already begun to spread, and at no time since the first agitation of the Texas question had the chances of success appeared so bright.[1]

But Houston persisted in his policy of playing England and France against the United States, in order to raise the annexation sentiment to a point at which renewed annexation proposals might have an even greater prospect of success. On December 13, 1843, he caused new instructions to be sent to Van Zandt, which declare, "Were Texas to agree to a treaty of annexation, the good offices of these powers (England and France) would be immediately withdrawn, and were the treaty then to fail of ratification by the Senate, . . . Texas would be placed in a much worse situation than she is at present, nor could she again ask or hope for any interposition in her behalf either by England or France,[2] . . . therefore, . . . the President deems it most proper and most advantageous to the interests of the country, to decline the proposition for concluding a treaty."[3]

This position caused the friends of annexation to send an appeal to Jackson, urging his assistance in bringing his friend, Sam Houston, to reason.

[1] Van Zandt to Jones, Nov. 4, 1843.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 225.

[2] Jones to Van Zandt, Dec. 13, 1843.—*Ibid.*, 233; Anon., *Memoir*, 235.

[3] "The present determination of the President," Van Zandt's instructions further frankly declare, ". . . does not proceed from any change in his views of the general policy of the measure, but from a change in the relations of this country with other powers."

It was written in the Senate Chamber, on January 10, 1844,[1] and reads as follows:

"DEAR SIR:

"I write to you confidentially and in haste. I think the annexation of Texas depends on you. Much as you have done for your country, this would be the crowning act. It seems, your old friend, Samuel Houston, President of Texas, believes, that if he made a treaty with this administration, it would be regarded as an administration measure and fail. This is a great mistake. I believe the measure would receive the vote of very nearly every Democrat in the Senate and many Whigs and I think would succeed. But delay the measure one or two years, and Texas is lost forever. May I then request you to write by the first mail to President Houston, and urge him to give the Texas Chargé instructions to make a treaty of annexation, or at least to make such a treaty if he believes it would succeed. . . .

"Most truly,

"R. J. WALKER.

"GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON.

"Address your letter to 'Samuel Houston, President of Texas, Washington, Texas, care of William Bryan, Texan Consul N. Orleans, Louisiana.'"

[1] Text, Jackson MSS., Library of Congress.

Jackson promptly responded to the call, as is shown by the following letter, written to Major William B. Lewis, his personal representative in Washington.[1]

"HERMITAGE,
"Janry. 18, 1844.

"MY DEAR MAJOR LEWIS,

. . . . . .

"I cannot think Houston can be Hostile to the annexation of Texas to the U. S. and in favor of a close aliance with England. I hope not. I have just closed a letter to him on this subject. If I live to receive an answer, you shall know its contents. I see Congress in Texas is in favour of annexation. Should Houston oppose it, he will be placed in a perilous situation and destroy him forever.

. . . . . .

"ANDREW JACKSON."

Houston, as Jackson was soon informed, was as eager as ever for annexation, but deemed it expedient for Texas not to again give her consent, until she should have definite assurance that the American nation was ready to receive her. Those assurances given, he addressed his friend and patron at the Hermitage in these words[2]:

[1] Jackson MSS., Ford Collection, Lenox Library.

[2] Houston to Jackson, Feb., 1844. Text, Bruce's *Houston*, 172. "Jackson," says Bruce, "was the only man to whose judgment Houston ever deferred."—*Ibid.*

> "Now, my venerated friend . . . Texas is presented to the United States, as a bride adorned for her espousal. But if now, so confident of the union, she should be rejected, her mortification would be indescribable. Were she now to be spurned . . . , she would seek some other friend. . . ."[1]

At this point occurred the sad catastrophe upon the man-of-war, *Princeton*,[2] in which the Secretary of State, Abel P. Upshur, lost his life; and John C. Calhoun was appointed to succeed him.[3]

How Calhoun enjoyed the sensation of again finding himself in his old position of carrying out the cherished plans of Andrew Jackson, must remain a matter of speculation; but his heart was enlisted in the cause of reannexation, and he pushed steadily forward plans for a treaty such as Upshur had contemplated.

Jackson as usual was restless and impatient of delay. On April 8, 1844, he wrote to Major Lewis,[4] "Please say to Mr. Walker to push this matter—have the treaty made and laid before the Senate. . . . This will prevent Mexico from invading Texas and be a barrier against the intrigues of Great Britain. . . . Say to him for me, and if you choose to the President, that delays

[1] He had just caused Van Zandt to be instructed to open the way for the negotiation of a treaty of annexation. Jones to Van Zandt, Jan. 27, 1844.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 248.

[2] Feb. 28, 1844.

[3] Confirmed and Commissioned, March 6, 1844.

[4] Text, Ford MSS., Lenox Library.

are dangerous. Houston and the people of Texas are now united in favor of annexation. The next President of Texas may not be so. . . . Obtain it the United States must, peaceably if we can, but forcibly if we must. . . . Having had some agency in bringing about this measure, I feel interested . . . that it should be promptly carried out in all good faith to General Houston. . . . If the President places the treaty before the Senate, these time-serving politicians will be compelled to vote for its confirmation . . . I hope the President, with a fearless energy, will progress not doubting." This hope was soon fulfilled. President Tyler considerately explained that there had been and should be no unnecessary delay.[1] Disquieting reports from England and from Texas regarding a plan to procure the general abolition of slavery throughout the world, he said, had made caution necessary,[2] but investigation had only served to show that prompt annexation was the surest way to meet her threatening movements.[3] He had, therefore, caused the treaty

[1] Tyler to Jackson, April 18, 1844. Jackson MSS., Library of Congress.

[2] The reference is to a letter from Lord Aberdeen which was published in the Charleston *Mercury* of May 2, 1844. In that letter he disclaimed any "desire to establish in Texas . . . any dominant influence"; but dispatches of Texas agents in London clearly pointed in the opposite direction. Compare Smith to Jones, July 2, 1843, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1100–1102: and Smith to Van Zandt, Jan. 25, 1843, *ibid.*, 1103–1107: and Edward Everett to Ashbel Smith, *ibid.*, iii, 1144: and Smith to Jones, Oct. 30, 1843, *ibid.*, 1472: and Smith to Edward Everett, Oct. 31, 1843, *ibid.*, 1145. See also Everett to Upshur, Nov. 16, 1843, in Niles, lxvi, 169–170.

[3] Calhoun, in replying to Lord Aberdeen's letter, made no pretense of faith in England's denial of a desire to establish a dominant influence

to be signed,[1] and sent to the United States Senate for ratification.

That night[2] John Quincy Adams entered in his diary the despairing words, "This was a memorable day in the annals of the world. The Treaty for the annexation of Texas to this Union was this day sent in to the Senate; and with it went the freedom of the human race." Mr. Adams, apparently, considered the ratification of the treaty inevitable[3]: but Jackson was under no such illusion. Five days before it had gone to the Senate, Sam Houston's Washington agent had written him,[4] "There appears to be a strong disposition among many of Mr. Clay's partizans in the Senate to postpone any definite action upon the proposed treaty. . . . On the other hand, Mr. Van Buren's friends are generally the open and strenuous and liberal advocates of annexation; but as to himself, it is unknown what course he may declare in favor of. . . . Much, very much,

in Texas. Text of his reply, Charleston *Mercury*, May 2, 1844. He also informed Santa Anna that the annexation treaty "had been forced on the Government of the United States . . . in consequence of the policy adopted by Great Britain in reference to the abolition of slavery in Texas."—Text, Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 17.

[1] April 12, 1844, Calhoun for the United States, Van Zandt and Henderson for Texas. See *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 269. For text of the treaty, see Charleston *Mercury*, May 2, 1844.

[2] April 22, 1844.—J. Q. Adams's *Memoirs*, xii, 13.

[3] Tyler also appeared to consider the matter disposed of, for, on April 18, 1844, he had written to Jackson, "For the part, my dear Sir, that you have taken in this great matter, you have only added another claim to the gratitude of your country."—Jackson MSS., Library of Congress.

[4] W. D. Miller to Andrew Jackson, April 7, 1844. Jackson MSS., Library of Congress.

my dear General . . . , depends upon your continued efforts. . . . From the relations in which you stand to President Houston, enjoying in the fullest degree his confidence, and friendship, and I might add, even affection, you will be able to give those Senators, with whom you might communicate, some very wholesome and available advice."

Jackson readily communicated his "wholesome and available advice," but so did Clay and Van Buren, each declaring against immediate annexation, in letters published almost at the same moment[1]; and their combined influence defeated the treaty.[2]

Like a good general, Jackson was prepared for this contingency. On May 3, 1844, he had written to Major Lewis,[3] should the treaty fail of ratification, "I trust some of our members will have energy enough to present a bill, and have it passed through Congress, accepting of the tender, and annexing Texas to this Union. This will be both legal and constitutional, . . . Please, with my respects to Senator Walker, to give him my ideas, should the Senate fail to ratify the treaty, of having a law proposed by Congress, accepting of the

[1] Clay in the Raleigh letter of April 17, 1844.—Text, Colton's *Last Years of Henry Clay*, 25–31, and Niles, lxvi, 152–153. See also Clay to Crittenden, April 17, 1844, in Coleman's *Crittenden*, ii, 219.

For Van Buren's letter, published in the *Globe*, see Niles, lxvi, 153–157.

[2] The vote was taken on June 8, 1844, and stood 35 to 16. See Van Zandt and Henderson to Jones, June 10, 1844.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 284.

[3] Ford MSS., Lenox Library.

annexation of Texas. . . . I have received a very pleasant letter from Mr. Tyler on the subject of Texas. I am too feeble to reply to it."

As soon as the defeat of the treaty was announced, however, this feebleness appeared to depart. He deluged Washington with letters written to spur the President and the Annexationists in Congress to renewed effort; for to him it looked as though the time had arrived when the secret diplomacy of England and France might be crowned with success[1]; although, despite the discouragements of the moment, his faith in the ultimate success of the annexation movement never faltered. "Texas," he wrote on June 28, 1844,[2] "must make part of our union, cost what it may, and then we place at defiance the threats of combined Europe of invasion. We are incapable of defence on our west without it, where the excitement by England of Indians and negroes would prove fatal to our national safety. Texas must be ours, peaceably if can be, forcibly if we must." He then reviewed the history of our claims to Texas under the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, denounced the Florida treaty of 1819 which surrendered it, and John Quincy Adams, the father

[1] Indeed there was real danger of this. The Texan Chargé in London was instructed to "ascertain what offers . . . [England and France] . . . are disposed to make based upon the assurance from Texas, that she will maintain her national unity." Jones to Smith, July 14, 1844. *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1156. A dispatch a few days later makes it clear that Texas was disposed to conclude matters on this basis. Jones to Smith, Aug. 1, 1844. *Ibid.*, 1160. It is even more clearly stated later. *Ibid.*, 1163.

[2] Jackson to Lewis. Ford MSS., Lenox Library.

of that treaty. He passionately insisted upon the duty of the United States to hold and defend every foot of territory, "as far as the ancient limits of Louisiana." The treaty of annexation having failed, he declared, "we are still bound by the treaty of 1803," and urged his plan for annexing Texas by joint resolution.[1] It was this suggestion which finally led to victory, a victory doubly joyful for the aged Jackson, as it left in its wake the ruined hopes of his lifelong enemy, Henry Clay. Clay's influence had secured the defeat of Calhoun's treaty, but the success had involved him in a political maelstrom from which even his genius could not extricate him. In April, he had declared against immediate annexation under existing conditions,[2] and it was upon the basis of this statement that he had received the unanimous and enthusiastic nomination as the Presidential Candidate of the Whigs.[3]

As the campaign proceeded, the watchword of the Democrats, "reannexation of Texas and reoccupation of Oregon," began to have its effect. It appealed to the Anglo-Saxon instinct of domination; although to the Abolitionists it sounded only the note of slave-extension. To them, now

[1] Jackson to Lewis, Aug. 1, 1844. Ford MSS., Lenox Library.

In a letter of May 3, 1844 (*ibid.*), Jackson had specifically outlined this plan of annexation.

[2] As early as Jan. 20, 1844, Van Zandt had reported to his government the rumor that Clay's friends desired to postpone annexation "in order that Mr. Clay may have the credit of effecting it," as President after the next elections.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 241.

[3] At Baltimore, May 1, 1844. Sargent's *Clay*, 84, gives a graphic picture of the scene.

as always, the agitation for the reannexation of Texas was the result of a vast slaveholders' conspiracy, to gain new territory for "the accursed institution." In their excitement, they exalted Clay, the Whig candidate, as "irrevocably bound to oppose the annexation of Texas,"[1] and urged the Abolitionists to support him in preference to their own candidate, James G. Birney, whom they could not hope to elect. Clay even found himself represented as an Abolitionist, a charge which he deeply resented.[2] To his kinsman Cassius M. Clay, a violent Abolitionist, whose speeches were often confused with his own, he wrote, "At the North I am represented as an ultra supporter of the institution of slavery, while at the South I am described as an Abolitionist; when I am neither the one nor the other. As we have the same surname, . . . great use is made at the South against me of whatever falls from you."[3]

In the midst of the campaign, with enemies ready to misinterpret anything which he might say, Clay made the fatal mistake of attempting to explain that his opposition to the annexation of Texas was not, and had never been, based upon anti-slavery grounds. His restatement was in words very similar to the words of his Raleigh

[1] Cassius M. Clay's *Memoirs*, i, 93.

[2] "As to the idea of my courting the Abolitionists," he wrote, "it is perfectly absurd. No man in the United States has been half as much abused by them as I have been."—Colton's *Private Correspondence of Henry Clay*, 490–491.

[3] *Memoirs of Cassius M. Clay*, i, 101–102, for full text. See also Clay to Miller, Colton's *Private Correspondence of Henry Clay*, 490.

letter,[1] "Far from having any personal objection to the annexation of Texas," he wrote,[2] "I should be glad to see it, without dishonor, without war, with the common consent of the Union, and upon just and fair terms. I do not think that the subject of slavery ought to affect the question. . . . Whether Texas be independent, or incorporated in the United States, I do not believe it will prolong or shorten the duration of that institution. It is destined to become extinct . . . by the operation of the inevitable laws of population. It would be unwise to refuse a permanent acquisition, which will exist as long as the globe remains, on account of a temporary institution."

This is not the letter of a political trimmer, such as Henry Clay has been made to appear in connection with this incident. And the same may be said of the so-called "Alabama letters," which appeared about the same time.[3] These are all consistent with his Raleigh letter which preceded his nomination, and with his numerous private letters of the period. They all show that Henry Clay was not an Abolitionist, and was not fairly entitled to the support of the Abolitionists. In

[1] The Raleigh letter of April 17, 1844, while declaring against immediate annexation, had declared, "If without loss of national character, without the hazard of foreign war, with the general concurrence of the nation, without any danger to the integrity of the Union, and without giving an unreasonable price for Texas, the question of annexation were presented, it would appear in quite a different light."—Niles, lxvi, 152–153.

[2] Clay to Peters and John M. Jackson, Ashland, July 27, 1844.—Text, Niles, xlvi, 439.

[3] For fuller discussion see McElroy's *Kentucky in the Nation's History*, 419 *et seq.*

this restatement of his real position, in the face of misrepresentation, there is no evidence of "playing a sharp game." But, whatever the motive, it proved fatal to his lifelong ambition of becoming President. Every effort to convince the North that he had not changed the position, upon the basis of which he had received the nomination, failed. The Polk presses held up to ridicule what they termed, "Clay's six Texas Manifestoes." Before the restatement of his position, he had been regarded as boldly protesting against what many regarded as a national crime in contemplation, the robbing of a helpless neighbor. Now he found himself in the infinitely weaker position of mildly advocating a policy which his opponents boldly proclaimed as the call of destiny. He had exposed himself to the charge of playing with a solemn principle, of catering to the South in order to win the vote of slaveholders; and that was an offense which the Northern anti-slavery Whigs could never condone. John Quincy Adams, his old ally, William H. Seward, the scholar-statesman, Fessenden, Giddings, Thaddeus Stevens, and a host of others from his Northern fellow-Whigs, promptly deserted him. The anti-slavery Democrats of the North, Hale, Hamlin, Wilmot, and Chase, who had begun to feel that Clay's anti-annexation position could cover a multitude of sins, even the sin of being a Whig, and so contemplated giving him their support against James K. Polk, the "black horse of the Democracy," now turned from him in dismay,

and began the formation of an independent party from which, in the days to come, was to rise the giant form of Lincoln's "Black Republican Party," holding the question of preventing the spread of slavery as the supreme question of national affairs.

It was these two elements that wrecked the presidential prospects of the "Great Commoner." Had he retained his hold upon the fifty thousand Abolitionist votes which were deliberately thrown away upon James G. Birney,[1] he would have been chosen President; but, with the anti-slavery element in opposition, that chance was gone. Thus his defeat, hard to bear under any conditions, was made doubly hard by the obtrusive consciousness that he had been his own political executioner; while more distressing still was the knowledge that, back of the victorious Polk, whose bonfires were even now visible upon the horizon in every direction, stood the grim figure of the relentless Jackson, tottering on the verge of the grave, but rejoicing that he had been spared to administer this final defeat to the "Black-leg" of the fancied bargain of 1824.

If it is "bad politics" to court the favor only of those who agree with your position, Henry Clay was certainly guilty of "bad politics" in this

[1] Blaine's *Twenty Years in Congress*, i, 37, for table showing these facts. On Nov. 21, 1844, Ambrose Spencer wrote Clay from Albany, N. Y., "You will perceive [from certain figures given] that the Abolition vote lost you the election, as three fourths of them were firm Whigs, converted into Abolitionists."—Text, Colton's *Private Correspondence of Henry Clay*, 501-502.

campaign. He alienated the Abolitionists, by a clear statement that their views on the annexation question were not his views. By this he lost the election, because there were not Whigs enough left to elect him; but those who were left were his real followers, and they could point "with unutterable pride to the fact that we cast our votes for the man 'who would rather be right, than be President.'"[1]

The election, then, had gone as the Annexationists had planned that it should go. The Van Buren antis had been swallowed up; and the nation had declared, as clearly as a national election can declare, in favor of the re-annexation of Texas. "A controlling majority of the people, and a large majority of the States," said President Tyler, in his last annual message to Congress,[2] "have declared in favor of immediate annexation. . . . It is the will of both the people and the States, that Texas be annexed to the Union, promptly and immediately." And then he submits the suggestion, already met with in two of Jackson's letters, that the expressed will of the American nation be carried out in the simplest way possible, namely by joint resolution.

Jackson, meanwhile, ever watchful of develop-

[1] From a memorial sent Mr. Clay on Nov. 27, 1844, signed by numerous political admirers.—Text, Colton's *Private Correspondence of Henry Clay*, 507. About twenty-five pages of this collection (*i. e.*, pp. 495–520) are filled with letters and memorials of this same character, praising Mr. Clay's actions during the campaign.

[2] Dec. 3, 1844.—Richardson's *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, v, 344.

ments in the Southwest, had seen a vision of coming disaster, should annexation be delayed even to the date of Polk's inauguration. On January 15, 1845, he wrote to Major Lewis[1] that a great British party was arising in Texas, which England was rapidly enlarging by tempting offers made to individuals. The plan, as he saw it, meant British domination, not alone in Texas, but in Mexico and California also. "It is taking deep root," he added, "and Elliot, the British minister, is fomenting it. . . . If Congress does not pass the law (annexing Texas) this session, I hesitate not in believing that Texas is lost. Polk's administration will be saved from all deliberation on the subject."

Fortunately there was little disposition for delay manifested in Congress. The House, on January 25, 1845, passed a bill for the erection of a new State upon the territory "included within and rightfully belonging to the Republic of Texas";[2] and a month later the Senate accepted it.[3] On March 3, 1845, therefore, only a few hours before the end of his term of office, President Tyler was able to dispatch the joint resolution[4]

[1] Text, Ford MSS., Lenox Library.

[2] Raymond to Allen, Jan. 27, 1845.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 352.

[3] The Senate amended the House bill, but its amendment was accepted the very day it was made. See Raymond to Allen, Feb. 28, 1845.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 364-365.

[4] Brooks's *History of the Mexican War*, 54, for text. It was presented to the Texan Government, on March 31, 1845, by Andrew Jackson Donelson, nephew of the General.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 312 and 382, and iii, 1194-1195.

to Texas for the consideration of that Government. On the fourth of July of the same year, a convention[1] of delegates representing the people of Texas passed an ordinance accepting the terms of annexation offered by the joint resolution; and, with this ordinance, there was forwarded to the United States a resolution of the Texan Congress, "tendering to General Andrew Jackson the tribute of a nation's gratitude."[2]

Thus were the machinations of England and France brought to naught. "The American principle of self-government," as Polk phrased it in his first annual message,[3] had proved "sufficient to defeat the purposes of British and French interference."

Those purposes had not been abandoned until the very end, however.[4] Even at the eleventh

[1] The convention was called, as it was felt that "the people were entitled to choose between the two alternatives," annexation upon the terms offered by the United States, and recognition of independence by Mexico, upon condition that a separate existence should be maintained, which England and France had just succeeded in inducing Mexico to offer. Allen to Kaufman, July 10, 1845.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 385. See also Jones to Polk, *ibid.*, 386–387. In a letter of May 9, 1845, Terrell thus sums up the alternative as it appears to him from his position near the British Court. "The question then resolves itself into this shape—will the people of Texas have independence, peace, and a lucrative trade with Mexico, commercial relations, upon the most favorable terms, with England, France, and the West Indies, low tariff and low taxes, or will they deliver themselves, bound hand and foot, stript of all they have and are, and manacled in chains of bondage which they can never break . . . into the hands of the United States?" Terrell to Smith, May 9, 1845.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1191.

[2] Allen to Kaufman, July 10, 1845.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 381–382.

[3] Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 387.

[4] On Jan. 25, 1845, the Texan Chargé at London wrote that France had intimated her willingness, "to go with England the whole length,

hour, after the Congress of the United States had passed the annexation resolutions, the British and French representatives drafted "Conditions preliminary to a treaty of peace," based upon the proposition that Mexico should recognize the independence of Texas, in return for a pledge that Texas would remain "separate from all other countries."[1] This document was presented to the Mexican authorities by the British Chargé, and favorably received by President Herrera as "a positive and unsolicited concession" to the mother country.[2] A council of Ministers and the Mexican Cabinet agreed that it should be accepted; but, as a measure involving the alienation of territory claimed by Mexico, it was necessary to gain the consent of the Mexican Congress. Great precaution was taken to keep the matter secret until a definite decision could be reached; but the facts leaked out, as they are almost certain to do in such cases; and the Mexican papers began a crusade against the policy of "selling a part of the fatherland for British gold." They saw, as their officers had apparently been unable to see, that England and France were

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which she proposes to go, which is even to the hazard of war."—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1172.

[1] The activities of the French and British representatives, together with the Texan Secretary of State who was opposed to annexation, are elaborately described in a scholarly article entitled, "The Mexican Recognition of Texas," by Justin H. Smith, published in the *American Historical Review* of October, 1910.

[2] For an official explanation of the President's position, see *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 385. For details of British and French plans, *ibid.*, iii, 1170–1176.

only laying deeper the foundations of their control over Mexico, by their ostentatiously friendly offices. England has discovered, said one, that, "in order to avoid ruin, . . . [she] must establish, somewhere in America, a system of trade like that now flourishing in the East Indies. What better point can be found . . . than Texas? Firmly established there, she will reach out to California, and use the magnificent harbor of San Francisco to establish direct relations with Asia. . . . Then the lot of all Mexicans would, perhaps, be no more tolerable than that of the Mahrattas in Hindustan. . . England would transform their country, as she transformed the Ionian Islands, into a republic under her special protection."[1] These statements, coupled with the well-known fact that England was herself threatened with a war by the United States over the Oregon question, were enough to give pause to any nation, confronted with such a proposition as that before the Mexican Congress. England, at her best, has never been conspicuous for the disinterested altruism of her good offices; and it was doubtless a "godsend" to Mexico, as well as to the United States, that this pretty plot was interrupted by the news that Texas had accepted the terms of annexation offered by the United States.[2] The news did not arrive

[1] *Federacion y Tejas*, 1845. Quoted by Justin H. Smith in *American Historical Review*, Oct., 1910, pp. 50–51.

[2] This was on July 4, 1845. As late as May 3, 1845, the Texan Chargé at London wrote home that Lord Aberdeen had just informed him, "that Mexico is now willing to recognize the independence of Texas, and that he will in all probability receive intelligence to that effect by the next arrival from there." Terrell to Smith.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1186.

in time to prevent the Mexican Chamber of Deputies and Senate from voting to accept the Texas articles; but it did arrive in season to prevent the execution of the plan[1]; and, on July 10, 1845, the Texan Secretary of State informed the British Chargé that, "The preliminaries for a treaty with Mexico, on the basis of the continued separate nationality and independence of Texas, have been rejected."[2]

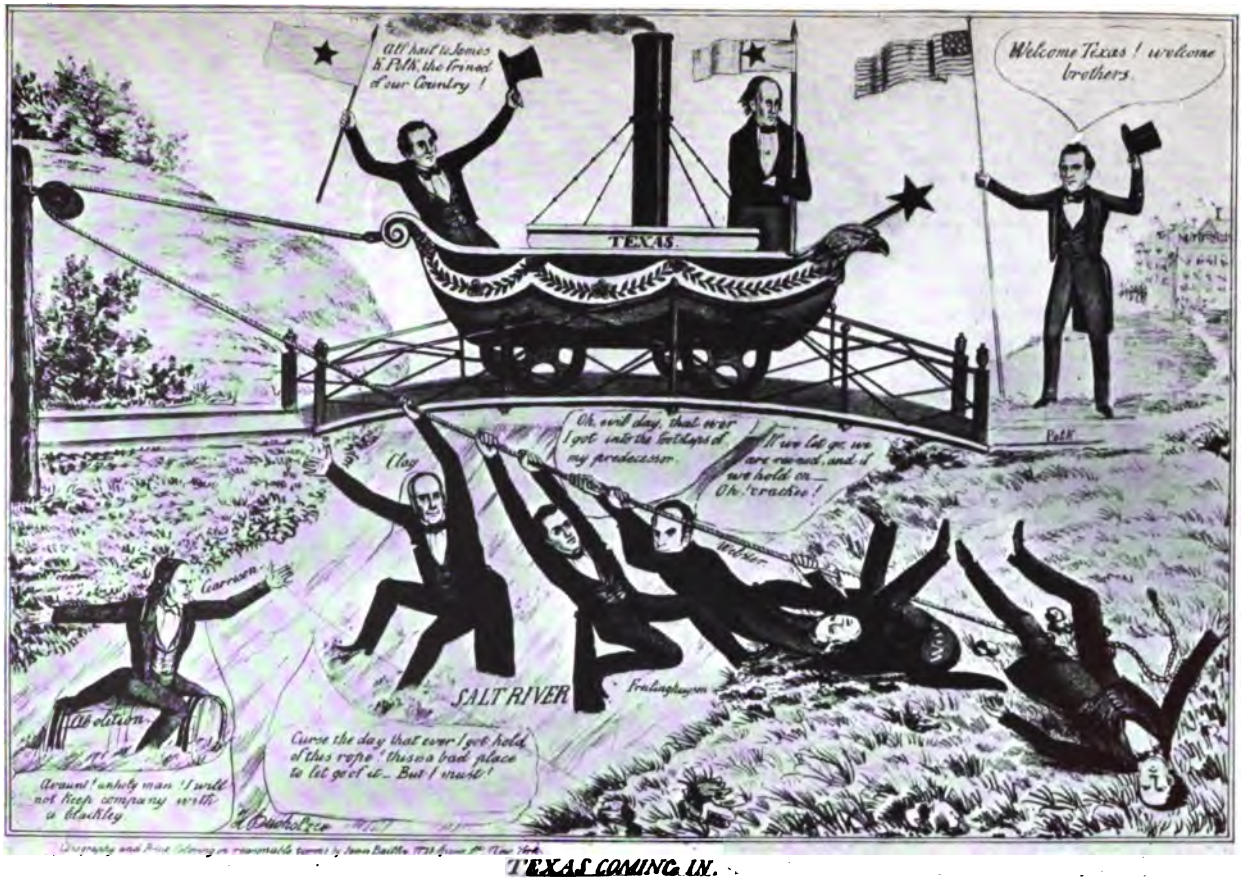
On December 9th, President Polk transmitted to the United States Senate a copy of the constitution of the State of Texas which had been duly "ratified, confirmed and adopted by the people . . . themselves";[3] and, twenty days later, Texas took her place as a State in the American Union.

There remained for England one last chance of retaining her existing advantages in Texas, and she promptly availed herself of it. On January 4th, Charles Elliot, the British Chargé, formally presented to the Texan Secretary of State a note from Lord Aberdeen, calling attention to the treaties existing between Great Britain and Texas, and declaring that these must be faithfully observed "precisely . . . as if Texas had continued

[1] "Mexico," says Polk's message of Dec. 2, 1845, "by a formal act, agreed to recognize the independence of Texas on condition that she would not annex herself to any other power," but "she had no right or authority to prescribe restrictions as to the form of government which Texas might afterwards choose to assume."—Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 389.

[2] Allen to Elliot, July 10, 1845.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1201.

[3] See special message of Dec. 9, 1845.—Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 416.



TEXAS COMING IN.

From a lithograph published in 1844

an independent power." "So long . . . as those treaties are in force," Lord Aberdeen added significantly, "Great Britain will have the right to require that the engagements contracted by them should be fulfilled on the part of Texas."[1]

The reply of Texas was prompt and conclusive: "The settlement of all questions growing out of her existing treaty relations with foreign powers must, so far as Texas is concerned, be necessarily referred to the government of the United States."[2] With that sentence closes the diplomatic correspondence between Texas and Great Britain.

Thus did Congress and Tyler, the "renegade President,"[3] carry into effect the will of the American people, clearly expressed upon an issue definitely formulated. "The lapse of forty years and the important events of intervening history," said James G. Blaine, writing in 1884, "give the opportunity for impartial judgment. . . . It was wiser policy to annex Texas, and accept the issue of immediate war with Mexico, than to leave Texas in nominal independence to involve us probably

[1] Aberdeen to Elliot, Dec. 3, 1845 [To be transmitted to the Texas Government].—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1203. The demand of France was equally explicit, delivered in a courteous note to the Texan Secretary of State, which recalled the treaty obligations of Texas, "les obligations dont la France attend avec confiance le fidèle accomplissement." Saligny to Allen, Jan. 14, 1846. *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1505. The reply was in terms similar to that which England had received.—Text, *ibid.*, 1505–1506.

[2] Allen to Elliot, Feb. 4, 1846.—*Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, iii, 1205.

[3] "It seemed as if a curse rested on all the statesmen who bent to the plans of this renegade President," writes Mr. Schouler, *History of the United States*, iv, 454.

in ultimate war with England. The entire history of subsequent events has vindicated the wisdom, the courage, and the statesmanship with which the Democratic party dealt with this question in 1844."[1]

The joint resolution of Congress, so ardently urged by Jackson, which marked the opening of the final stage in the long process of annexation, had been passed just in time to prevent the permanent defection of the one man who could have prevented annexation, even in its final stage. Late in February, 1845,[2] as one of his intimate friends tells us, Sam Houston "came into my room, booted, spurred, whip in hand. Said he, 'Saxe Weimar [his saddle horse] is at the door, saddled. I have come to leave Houston's last words with you. If the Congress of the United States shall not, by the fourth of March, pass some measure of annexation which Texas can with honor accede to, Houston will take the stump against annexation for all time to come.' Without another word . . . he mounted and left."[3]

Four months later, as the long shadows of a June twilight began to fall upon the Tennessee capital, the well-remembered figure of Sam Houston passed through that city in the direction of the Hermitage.[4] He was on his way to make

[1] *Twenty Years in Congress*, i, 40.

[2] The United States Senate gave its consent to the joint resolution for annexation, Feb. 27, 1845.

[3] Quoted, Bruce's *Houston*, 183.

[4] In December, 1844, Houston's second term as President of Texas had expired; and, under the Constitution, he could never again be eligible for that office.—Elliott's *Houston*, 128; Anon., *Memoir*, 252.

his final report to Andrew Jackson. Tidings had reached him that Jackson was fighting his last battle, this time with an unconquerable antagonist. As Houston approached the Hermitage, he met Jackson's family physician, driving slowly in the direction of Nashville. There was no need to ask the question—"Thirty minutes ago, at six o'clock in the evening, the end came. You are just too late."

CHAPTER IV

THE OREGON QUESTION

1493–1846.

IN the annexation of Texas, the first of the two great questions submitted to the country in the campaign of 1844 was settled, and in a manner calculated to elicit the praise of the candid and impartial historian. For, although the methods by which Jackson accomplished this end were far from admirable, the result was, in essence, good. We accepted the issue of a war with Mexico as a lesser evil than would probably have resulted from allowing England and France to have their will, and gain a controlling influence in Texas and Mexico.

It is now necessary to sketch the history of the rise and settlement of the second great question of that campaign, the reoccupation of Oregon; for to this policy, no less than to that of the "reannexation of Texas," the American people had given their assent in electing James K. Polk President.[1]

[1] The Democratic platform of 1844 declares, in the twelfth section, that "the re-occupation of Oregon and the re-annexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period, are great American measures, which this Convention recommends to the cordial support of the Democracy of the Union." *The Platform Text-Book*, Vincent Publishing Company, Omaha, 1912, 39.

In spite of the bold statements of the Democratic Convention which nominated Polk, "that our title to the whole of the Territory of Oregon is clear and unquestionable,"[1] it had long been questioned, and was involved in a tangle of historical complications which left it far from clear. Spain, France, Russia, England, and the United States had all, at one time or another, asserted to the Oregon region claims based upon that most elusory of bases, priority of discovery.[2] The most ancient of these claims, that of Spain, dated back to the fourth day of May, 1493,[3] when Pope Alexander VI had ventured, by virtue of his prerogative as "Vice-Regent of God on Earth," to divide the world between Spain and Portugal, Spain to have all land discovered or to be discovered west of the famous Line of Demarcation.[4] To this claim, which lost its force as soon as the Reformation had liberated a part of Europe from the absolute supremacy of the Papacy, Spain added that of priority of

[1] *Ibid.*, See also Polk's Inaugural Address, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 381.

[2] For details of the Spanish discoveries on this northwest coast, see Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 108–126. For the French claims, and their origin, see *ibid.*, 102–103. For the Russian claims and their origin, see *ibid.*, chapters v and xii. See also "Confidential Memorial," upon the "rights and claims of Spain, of Russia, of England, and of the United States, relative to the west coast of North America." Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels. v, 449 *et seq.*

[3] "Spain . . . in 1692, claimed the exclusive property of the coasts which she had there discovered, in virtue of grants made by an authority respected at the time." "Confidential Memorial," Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., v, 450. See also *ibid.*, iv, 471.

[4] The location of the line was finally fixed, on June 7, 1494, in the treaty of Tordesillas, at 370 leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands.

discovery in the Oregon region itself, the Spaniards having explored as far north as the 43d parallel, in 1543, in the expedition under Cabrillo and Ferrelo[1]; as far as the 47th degree, in the expedition under Juan de Fuca in 1592, and as far as the 55th degree in that of Admiral Fonté in 1640.[2] There were also innumerable later voyages which served to strengthen this claim, chief among which was that of Ensign Juan Perez[3] who, on August 9, 1774, had reached a deep bay under the parallel 49° and 30′, without doubt the bay to which the famous English discoverer, Captain Cook, later gave the name George's or Nootka Sound.

To this Spanish claim to Oregon, from whatever sources derived, however, the United States succeeded when the Florida treaty of 1819 was finally signed, as that treaty provided that a line be drawn along the 42d parallel, from the Rockies to the Pacific, to serve as the northern limit of Spain's Pacific coast territory, his Catholic Majesty ceding to the United States, "all his rights, and claims, and pretensions, to any territory east and north of the said line."[4]

Our title thus derived was, however, not undisputed, for England had specifically refused to

[1] Greenhow's *Memoir*, 31.

[2] This is the statement made by Don Louis de Onis to John Quincy Adams during the negotiation of the treaty of 1819. Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., iv, 455. For account of Fuca's voyage, see Purchas' *Pilgrims*, iii, 849. See also Vancouver's *Voyage*, 1798 ed., i, 213.

[3] See Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., vi, 662.

[4] Text, Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., iv, 623–625.

admit it, taking the ground that, by the Nootka treaty of 1790, Spain had freely acknowledged the former's rights in the Oregon region as on a par with her own.[1] The obvious reply to this argument was promptly made, namely, that treaties between nations lapse with the outbreak of war, and that England had lost her rights under the Nootka Convention by declaring war against Spain in 1796. England's response was that the treaty of Madrid, of July 5, 1814, had explicitly stated that, "Great Britain shall be admitted to trade with Spain, upon the same conditions as those which existed previously to 1796; all the treaties of commerce which at that period subsisted between the two nations being hereby ratified and confirmed."[2] To this the United States replied that the Nootka Convention could not be considered as among "the treaties of commerce" here referred to.

By a subsequent treaty in 1828,[3] however, between the United States and Spain's heir, the republic of Mexico, the 42d parallel was agreed upon as the boundary line between the Pacific coast possessions of the two republics; and Mexico was acknowledged to be the owner of the vast territory west of the mountains, and south of this parallel.

[1] For British argument against our claim as based on the treaty of 1819, see Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels. vi, 663. See also Greenhow's *Memoir*, 173.

[2] Quoted in Greenhow's *Memoir*, 172.

[3] Text, Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., vi, 946–947 (English text), and 947–948 (Spanish text).

So much for America's claim to Oregon as derived from Spain. As a means of strengthening claims based upon other grounds, it was valuable; but it can hardly be seriously regarded as, in itself, constituting a "clear and unquestionable" right to the region.

The same may be said of our claim to Oregon as derived from France. By the treaty of 1803,[1] France had ceded to the United States the whole province of Louisiana, "with all its rights and appurtenances, as fully and in the same manner as they have been acquired by the French Republic." But when we attempt to discover exactly what this province was, we find it thus defined, in the treaty by which France had just acquired it from Spain: "the colony or province of Louisiana, with the same extent that it now has in the hands of Spain, and that it had when France possessed it, and such as it should be after the treaties subsequently entered into between Spain and other states,"[2] not a very enlightening definition.[3] Marbois, while engaged in drawing up the treaty of 1803, had complained to Napoleon that he was unable to determine, with any degree of precision, the proper

[1] Text, Marten's *Recueil des Principaux Traités*, vii, 707 *et seq.*

[2] Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., iv, 429-430.

[3] In his negotiations with Louis de Onis in 1819, John Quincy Adams cleverly interpreted these phrases as designed to include West Florida within the limits of Louisiana. See Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., iv, 430. Another interesting interpretation of these phrases is contained in a letter from Don Pedro Cevallos to Messrs. Monroe and Pinckney, dated February, 24, 1805. Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., ii, 645.

boundaries of the province. "If an obscurity did not already exist," replied the First Consul, "it would perhaps be good policy to put one" into the treaty.[1]

Whether by express intention or not, therefore, Louisiana, as defined in the treaty of 1803, was a tract as indeterminable as Napoleon, with his ambitious mind set upon a possible future recovery of the province, could have desired. Briefly, the history of its boundaries is about as follows: In 1712, Louis XIV of France, by royal charter, granted to Antoine Crozat[2] the exclusive trade of a vast region, "bounded by New Mexico and by [the territories] of the English in Carolina, all the establishments, ports, harbors, rivers, and especially the port and harbor of Dauphin Island, formerly called Massacre Island, the River St. Louis, formerly called the Mississippi, from the seashore to the Illinois, together with the Rivers St. Philip, formerly called the Missouries River, and the St. Jerome, formerly called the Wabash,[3] with all the countries, territories, lakes in the land, and the rivers emptying directly or indirectly into that part of the River St. Louis. All the said territories, . . . we will to be and remain comprised under the

[1] Barbé-Marbois, *History of the Louisiana Purchase* (edition of 1830, Philadelphia), 286.

[2] Vergennes's *Mémoire Historique et Politique Sur La Louisiane*, 1802 edition, 58. The history of these boundaries was also well summed up in one of John Quincy Adams's letters to Louis de Onis, during the negotiation of the Florida treaty of 1819. Text, Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., iv, 470 *et seq.*

[3] *I. e.*, the Ohio.

name of the Government of Louisiana."[1] This appears to be the earliest attempt to define the boundaries of Louisiana; and the territory thus defined, or undefined, passed, in the year 1717, back to the Crown. The Illinois country was then annexed to it; and the whole was granted to John Law's Mississippi Company until 1732, when it again reverted to the Crown, and remained a French province until 1763.

By the Peace of Paris of that year, France ceded to Spain "all the country known under the name of Louisiana, as also New Orleans and the island in which that city is situated."[2] Thus Louisiana, as held by Spain after 1763, included what Crozat had received in 1712, plus the Illinois country, together with the island of New Orleans. From that date to its purchase by the United States in 1803, its boundaries were never defined; and they remained the same when, on October 1, 1800, Louisiana was receded to France by Spain; and its cession to the United States in 1803 did not change them, or define them more exactly.

In these documents, one seeks in vain a justification of the contention, that the Oregon region was transferred to the United States as part of the

[1] The original text of this royal decree of September 17, 1712, appears in Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 277–278.

[2] Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 278. The documents concerning this cession were kept secret until 1836, when they were given out from Madrid. They were published by the United States Senate in 1837. *Ibid.*, note.

Louisiana Purchase. Jefferson himself explicitly denied it.[1] Marbois, who negotiated the treaty for France, denied it: and Spain subsequently, in boundary negotiations with the United States in 1804, boldly declared that France had never lawfully possessed any territory west of the Mississippi, all of which, she insisted, had been Spanish since its first discovery. That France had been allowed to occupy some of this region, she admitted, but insisted that such occupation had merely been tolerated by Spain for the sake of peace. The Louisiana which France had given her in the Peace of Paris, Spain insisted, and which she had receded to France in 1800, and which France had sold to the United States in 1803, could not in justice be considered as anything more than New Orleans, with the tract near it east of the Mississippi, and the territory immediately bordering on the west bank of that river.[2]

In this case, therefore, as in the case of our accession to the Spanish claims in Oregon, it was certainly excessive to claim that our ownership of Oregon was "clear and unquestionable."

There was, however, one basis upon which the United States could rest a claim to Oregon, independent of the cessions of any foreign power. In 1792, an American sailor, Captain Robert Gray, sailing under the patronage of Congress,

[1] Jefferson to John Melish, December 31, 1816. Jefferson's *Works*, Memorial edition, xv, 94.

[2] Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 280.

had entered and ascended the Columbia River,[1] thus giving to his country a claim, by priority of discovery, to all the region drained by that river; but this claim had been persistently questioned by England from the very first.[2] Indeed a counter claim had been set up by England before Gray's report was in the hands of his government, for, as he passed out to sea after his explorations in the Columbia, he met an English expedition commanded by Captain Vancouver, intent upon making discoveries in the same region. Gray generously gave them a copy of the chart which he had made of the region included in his discovery;[3] and Vancouver promptly dispatched a boat up the newly found "Columbia River, so named by Mr. Gray,"[4] and took possession of the region in the name of his Britannic Majesty.

Captain Gray's discovery of the Columbia River did not become known until after the publication, in 1798, of the story of Vancouver's

[1] An extract from Gray's Log Book is reprinted in Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, Appendix E, No 2. See also De Smet's "Oregon Mission" in Thwaites's *Early Western Voyages*, xxix, 117.

[2] Spain had, of course, a better claim by priority of discovery, but it had clearly passed to the United States, with the province of Florida, by the treaty of 1819.

[3] Vancouver's *Journal* for October, 1792, speaks of his plan "to re-examine the coast of New Albion, and particularly a river and harbour discovered by Mr. Gray in the Columbia between the 46th and 47th degrees of North Latitude, of which Senr. Quadra had favoured me with a sketch."

[4] Vancouver's *Voyage*, 1798 ed., i, 419. Franchère falsely gives the impression that Vancouver named the Columbia. See text, in Thwaites's *Early Western Travels*, vi, 184.

expedition,[1] and even then was regarded with little interest, as the region to which it gave a title was so distant as to be of little value to the new Republic. It was nevertheless destined to play a large part in the settlement of a great question: but, before the day of final reckoning came, the British nation had convinced itself that the Columbia had been visited by Englishmen before either Gray or Vancouver had dared the terrors of hidden reef and ruthless wave which guard its forbidding mouth.[2]

Although no one of these claims can, therefore, be properly termed "clear and unquestionable," they together furnished President Jefferson with sufficient ground for setting on foot a westward movement, destined in time to add irresistible force to our Oregon claims. On January 18, 1803, he sent to Congress a special message,[3] urging the appropriation of two thousand five hundred dollars,

[1] *A Voyage of Discovery to the Northern Pacific Ocean and Round the World, in which the Coast of Northwest America has been Carefully Examined and Accurately surveyed.* By Captain George Vancouver. Three volumes, handsomely illustrated, and accompanied by a large *Atlas to the Vancouver Voyages.* London, 1798. Copy in New York Public Library.

[2] In a discussion with the United States which took place in 1826, the British Government declared that, setting aside Drake, Cook, and Vancouver, she could "show that in 1788—that is four years before Gray entered the mouth of the Columbia River—Mr. Meares, a Lieutenant of the royal navy, . . . had actually entered the bay of the Columbia, to the northern headland of which he gave the name of Cape Disappointment." British statement annexed to the Protocol of the Sixth Conference, held at London, December 16, 1826. Text, Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels, vi., 663–664. The claims based on Meares's expedition will be examined in connection with the British claim to Oregon.

[3] Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, i, 352 *et seq.*, for text.

"for the purpose of extending the external commerce of the United States," with the understanding that this money could be used for sending out a party to explore the Northwest. To make the appropriation in this form, he argued, "would cover the undertaking from notice and prevent the obstructions which interested individuals might otherwise previously prepare in its way."

Congress readily assented to the plan and Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were duly commissioned to explore the Missouri River and its chief branches to their sources. The month of May, 1804, found these adventurers beginning the ascent of the Missouri,[1] and the end of October saw them in winter quarters among the Mandan Indians, where they remained until the following April. They then resumed their journey, following the Missouri past its junction with the Yellowstone, till they had traversed "the gates of the Rocky Mountains" (July 19, 1805).[2] Here they found a river leading westward; and, following its course, through, "every suffering which hunger, cold and fatigue, could impose," as Clark informs us, they arrived at last, on November 15th, at the mouth of the Columbia,[3] having traversed more than four thousand miles of wilderness since leaving the mouth of the Missouri.

This great expedition was regarded as a declaration of the intention of Mr. Jefferson's government

[1] Thwaites's *Original Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, i, 17.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii, 248.
[3] *Ibid.*, iii, 224–226.

to occupy the regions thus explored, and to connect them with the East by the development of an overland trade;[1] and in it we see the advance-guard of that westward movement which was soon to carry the Stars and Stripes, in undisputed supremacy, from sea to sea.[2]

The Lewis and Clark expedition was promptly followed up by enterprising traders of the United States; and with each new station the claims of this country grew stronger. As early as 1808, the Missouri Fur Company was founded, and succeeded, a year later, in planting an American trading station on the Lewis River, the great southern branch of the Columbia. This was the first establishment by any nation in the vast region drained by that river; but, in 1810, it had to be abandoned owing to Indian hostilities and lack of provisions. During that same year,[3] how-

[1] The meaning of the Lewis and Clark expedition was not lost on England; and, in 1805, Mr. Laroque was sent to establish British posts on the Columbia. He accomplished little of value; but, the following year (1806), Simon Fraser crossed the Rockies with a body of Englishmen and established on Fraser's Lake (54°) the first British post west of the Rocky Mountains (Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 290). It lay, however, far to the north of the Columbia River region, which remained unoccupied by civilized men until 1811, when John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company established its famous station, Fort Astor, at the mouth of the Columbia. Details, Franchère's *Narrative of a Voyage to the Northwest Coast of America.*

[2] While Lewis and Clark were pushing on toward the Pacific, Lieutenant Pike was ascending the Mississippi to its headwaters; and, in 1806, he explored the region lying between the mouth of the Missouri, the upper waters of the Arkansas, the Red, and the Rio Grande. See Elliott Cones's *Expeditions of Z. M. Pike*, N. Y., 1895, 2 vols., and a volume of maps.

[3] At the same time other explorers were widening the Great West by similar expeditions.

ever, a German merchant of New York, John Jacob Astor, who had grown rich by his skillful conduct of Americo-Chinese trade,[1] devised a scheme for concentrating in his own hands the fur trade of the Northwest, the Russian trade on the Pacific coast, and the commerce between China and the American Northwest. A company, called the Pacific Fur Company, was formed, Astor advancing the necessary capital, and retaining the controlling voice in its plans. According to those plans, trading posts were to be built on the Missouri, the Columbia, and the Pacific coast, to serve as collecting stations for as vast a fur-bearing region as could be made tributary. These stations were to be supplied with articles for Indian trade and with necessary provisions, by caravan routes and river navigation up the Missouri, or by vessels sent from the eastern ports of America. The furs collected by them were to constitute the return freight, and, when landed at the chief station on the Pacific, were to be sent to Canton, China, where they would be converted into the Oriental products paying the best returns in Europe. Provision was also made for the systematic visiting, by the vessels of the Company, at the Russian establishments on the northwestern coast of America, where furs, ready gathered from the interior, could be secured[2] in exchange for provisions and manufactured goods from Europe or America.

[1] Sketch of Astor's early life, Irving's *Astoria*, chapters ii and iii.

[2] *Astoria*, chapter iii.

The only serious rival to this company was the British Northwest Company of Montreal, and to them Astor offered a one-third interest in his venture, which offer was rejected.[1] Astor, however, managed to secure, among other partners of his enterprise, Alexander Mackay, Duncan Macdougal, and Donald Mackenzie, who had been associated with the Northwest Company and were familiar with its plans and methods,[2] they, as were the majority of the partners and agents of the Company as finally constituted, being British subjects.[3]

In the spring of 1811 a little station, called Astoria, was built on the south side of the Columbia River, about ten miles from the ocean[4]; but, before it was fairly completed, it was visited by a

[1] Irving's *Astoria*, chapter iii. Ross Cox's *Adventures on the Columbia River*, ix. Franchère's *Narrative*, Introduction. For organization and activities of the Northwest Company, see J. Long's *Voyages* (Thwaites's *Early Western Voyages*, vol. ii, 15–16). Until 1821, it was also the jealous and successful rival of the Hudson's Bay Company; but in that year the two were consolidated by act of Parliament, under the title of the Hudson's Bay Company. Farnham's *Travels* (Thwaites's *Early Western Voyages*, vol. xxix, p. 52).

[2] These men signed an agreement with Mr. Astor on June 23, 1810. Three more Northwest Company men were a little later admitted as partners, David Stuart, Robert Stuart, and Ramsay Crooks, all Scotchmen like the first three. Three Americans, Wilson Price Hunt, John Clarke, and Robert Maclellan were also admitted as partners.

Two of the clerks of the Company, Ross Cox and Gabriel Franchère, later wrote historical sketches of the operations of the Company. These, with Washington Irving's *Astoria*, are the chief sources for the early history of the Pacific Fur Company, covering a period of three or four years.

[3] Franchère's *Narrative* (Thwaites's *Early Western Voyages*, vol. vi, 194) gives a list of all who sailed on the *Tonquin*, the first Pacific Company's boat to sail for the Columbia River.

[4] Franchère's *Narrative* (Thwaites's edition), 241 *et seq.* Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 296. Ross Cox's *Adventures on the Columbia River*, 54 *et seq.*, for fuller details of the founding of Astoria.

body of men, under Mr. David Thompson, who had been sent out by the Northwest Company to forestall the Pacific Company in occupying the mouth of the Columbia.[1] This party had been delayed by the passage of the Rockies, for they had come overland; but, while descending the Columbia, they had laid claim to various points, by constructing rude huts or erecting flagstaffs flying the British colors. It was these establishments which served as the basis of the claim advanced by the British Commissioners in 1826, that the "Northwest Trading Company had, by means of their agent, Mr. Thompson, . . . established their posts . . . on the head-waters of the northern or main branch of the Columbia," at least as early as the Lewis and Clark expedition.[2] The fact is, says Greenhow, "that Lewis and Clark descended the Columbia and reached its mouth before the middle of November, 1805—[and] that the Northwest Company made their first establishment beyond the Rocky Mountains, at some distance north of any part of the Columbia, in 1806—that the American establishments were formed on the Columbia in 1809, 1810, and 1811,—and, finally, that Thompson did not arrive . . . [on the main branch of the Columbia] until the spring of 1811, after the foundation of Astoria."[3]

[1] Ross Cox's *Adventures on the Columbia River*, 59.

[2] British statement annexed to the Protocol of London Conference of December 16, 1826. Text, Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., vi, 662–666.

[3] *Oregon and California*, 298. It was July 15, 1811, when Thompson and his men reached Astoria. Franchère's *Narrative* (Thwaites's edition), 252 *et seq.*, for details of their arrival.

The men at Astoria were just beginning to feel that the hard and uncertain period of their undertaking was over, when, on January 15, 1813, they received the news that England and the United States were at war,[1] and that a British squadron was on its way to the Columbia River with orders, "to take and destroy everything American on the Northwest Coast." Therefore, without waiting to be attacked, Macdougal, Mackenzie, and Clarke, the Pacific Company partners resident at Astoria, signed, on October 16, 1813,[2] with the representatives of the Northwest Company, an agreement "by which all the 'establishments, furs, and stock in hand,' of the Pacific Company in the country of the Columbia, were sold to the Northwest Company for about fifty-eight thousand dollars."[3]

While the arrangements for transferring this property were in progress, a British sloop of war, the *Raccoon*, appeared in the Columbia River (December 1, 1813). Captain Black, its commander, manifested extreme disappointment upon learning that the property now belonged to British subjects, as he had anticipated prize money from its capture. Gazing at the wooden fortifications of Astoria, he remarked, "Is this the fort about which I have heard so much? D—n me,

[1] Franchère's *Narrative* (Thwaites's edition), 280.

[2] Text, Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, Appendix G, 442–444. Gabriel Franchère, who signed this agreement as a witness, says, "It was signed by both parties on the 23rd of October."—*Narrative*, Thwaites's edition, 296.

[3] Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 303, 304.

but I'd batter it down in two hours with a four-pounder."[1] As there was, however, no necessity for battering it down, Captain Black was forced to content himself with taking possession of Astoria in the name of the King, and rechristening it Fort George,[2] thus changing the character of the transfer from that of a mere sale from one company to another, to that of a military conquest, a change which, under the provisions of the treaty of Ghent,[3] caused its subsequent restoration to the United States, in the year 1818.[4]

For ten years after the capture of Astoria, scarcely an American was to be seen in the region about the Columbia River. Until after 1834, the few hundreds who penetrated beyond the mountains confined their activities almost exclusively to the headwaters of the Columbia, and to the region known as the Great Salt Lake district. Thus left unhampered by American competition, the Hudson's Bay Company prospered greatly in the region,

[1] Ross Cox, *Adventures on the Columbia River*, 132, note. Franchère's *Narrative* (Thwaites's edition), 302, gives the same story in almost the same words. He adds the opinion that the station of Astoria could easily "have escaped capture by the British force," by merely removing "our effects up the river upon some small stream." "Those at the head of affairs had their own fortunes to seek . . . and the charge of treason to Mr. Astor's interests will always be attached to their characters."

[2] Franchère's *Narrative*, 301, for full details.

[3] The first article of the treaty of Ghent provided that "all territory, places, and possessions, whatsoever, taken by either party from the other during the war . . . (certain specified islands excepted) . . . shall be restored without delay." Text, *Treaties and Conventions Concluded between the United States of America and Other Powers since July 4, 1776*, Government Printing Office, 1889, pp. 399–405.

[4] Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., vi, 665.

and its posts were extended and fortified. The whole Columbia River district was soon occupied by British subjects, and governed according to British laws, and Farnham, visiting it in 1839, complained that[1] "the trade, and the civil and criminal jurisdiction in Oregon are held by British subjects; . . . American citizens are deprived of their own commercial rights; . . . they are liable to be arrested on their own territory by officers of British courts, tried in the American domain by British judges, and imprisoned or hung according to the laws of the British Empire. . . . Astoria has passed away; nothing is left of its buildings but an old batten cedar door. . . . No information could be obtained as to the length of time it has been decaying." And yet "the value of the peltries annually collected in Oregon by the Hudson's Bay Company is about one hundred and forty thousand pounds."[2]

Spain and France having been completely eliminated from the Oregon region by the methods already described, only Russia and England remained to be reckoned with by the United States.

The Russian claims upon the northwest coast of America did not date back to such early expeditions as did those of Spain and England. It was under Czar Ivan "the Terrible"[3] that Russia began that remarkable conquest of Siberia, in pursuance of which she pressed steadily eastward,

[1] Farnham's *Travels* (Thwaites's *Early Western Travels*, vol. xxix, 61).
[2] Franchère's *Narrative* (Thwaites's edition), 253.
[3] Czar from 1547 to 1584.

impelled by a force similar to that which was driving other European peoples westward; and, within half a century, Cossack horsemen were standing on the eastern extremity of Asia, gazing out upon the Pacific Ocean. A few decades later, there came to the Russian throne her most famous Czar, Peter "the Great," who, in 1689, became the absolute ruler[1] of an empire scarcely more civilized than the Mexico of Cortez's day. Not only was she without a fleet, but the Russian language contained no word to express the idea of a fleet. Before Peter's death, in 1725, however, he had laid the foundation of the Russian naval power, and had started the Pacific explorations destined to complete the proof that the new continents of America were wholly disconnected from Asia. The man chosen for these Pacific explorations was Vitus Bering, a native of Jutland, who had gained the confidence of the great Czar by his efficent service in the wars against Charles XII of Sweden, "the Madman of the North." In 1725, Bering entered the Pacific, and, by 1728, had sailed his vessel to the parallel 67° 18′ north latitude, thus winning for Russia the honor of discovering the straits which bear his name. In this expedition, however, Bering failed to see the American coast, which lay only a few miles to the east; and it was not until 1741 that, still carrying the flag of the Russias at his masthead, he sighted the lofty peak of Mt. St.

[1] It was in 1689 that Peter freed himself from the regency of his stepsister, Sophia; but it was not until 1721 that he assumed the full title of "Emperor of All the Russias."

Elias, and thus gave to Russia a claim, by virtue of priority of discovery, to a portion of the north-western coast of North America.[1]

The advantages for fur trading which this region offered were soon recognized by Russian merchants; and Russian companies were soon busy exploiting them. In 1799, by a union of existing companies, the Russian-American Company was formed, under a twenty-year charter which gave it the entire use and control of the Pacific coast of North America from the 55th parallel to Bering Strait.[2] It was further authorized to explore and bring under Russian control any other American territory not already attached to the dominion of some other civilized power. So effective was their work that by the end of two decades the Russian-American Company boldly claimed, by virtue of discovery and occupation, the whole coast of America on the Pacific, from Bering Strait southward to and beyond the mouth of the Columbia River. Until 1816, this claim mattered little to the United States; but in that year the Russians began extending their settlements southward, even entering the California district with the evident design of permanent occupation.[3]

[1] Fiske's *Discovery of America*, ii, 551.

[2] Memorial in Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., v, 450. Also, Adams to Middleton, July 22, 1823. *Ibid.*, 436.

[3] Monroe to Pinckney, May 10, 1816.—*Writings of James Monroe*, v, 383. "In adjusting these claims," says Monroe in this letter, ". . . it will be satisfactory to the United States to do it by adopting the 49th degree as the boundary."

See also Provost to the Secretary of State, November 11, 1818.—Text, Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., iv, 355.

Five years later, this Russian design was made perfectly evident by the publication of an edict of Emperor Alexander, declaring that "the pursuits of commerce, fishing, etc., on all islands, ports, including the whole of the Northwestern Coast of America beginning from the Bering Strait, to the fifty-first degree of north latitude, are exclusively granted to Russian subjects," and warning all foreign vessels neither to land within this reserved region, nor to come within one hundred Italian miles of its boundaries.[1]

It was this threatening advance which, in 1823, caused John Quincy Adams, the Secretary of State under President Monroe, to warn the Russian Minister that, "We should contest the right of Russia to any territorial establishment on this continent, and [that] we should assume distinctly the principle that the American Continents are no longer subjects for any new European colonial establishments."[2] From this bold statement, the advance-guard of the Monroe Doctrine, arose the negotiations with Russia which terminated in the Russian-American treaty of 1824,[3] in which

[1] Text, Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., iv, 857. "They had at first thought of declaring the Northern Pacific Ocean a 'mare clausum,' but afterwards took the one hundred Italian miles from the thirty leagues in the Treaty of Utrecht, which is an exclusion only from a fishery, and not from navigation."—John Quincy Adams's *Memoirs*, vi, 93.

[2] *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*, vi, 163.

[3] It was not ratified until January, 1825, and therefore bears the signature of John Quincy Adams as President. The text, together with the documents submitted to Congress with it, appears in the Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., v, 432–471.

Russia bound herself to make no claims to territory south of the parallel 54° 40′.[1]

This treaty reduced the Oregon question to a contest between the United States and England for a definite region, lying between the 42d parallel, Spain's self-imposed boundary, and 54° 40′, the southern boundary of the Russian territory of Alaska.[2] Spain and France had definitely withdrawn from the Pacific coast of North America;

[1] "It is . . . agreed that, hereafter, there shall not be formed by the citizens of the United States, or under the authority of the United States, any establishment upon the northwest coast of America . . . to the north of 54° 40′ of north latitude; and that in the same manner there shall be none formed by Russian subjects, or under the authority of Russia, south of the same parallel."—Text, American State Papers, Foreign Rels., v, 432 (French text), and 433 (English translation).

[2] On February 16, 1825, Russia and England concluded a treaty relative to the northwest coast of America, containing provisions similar, and almost identically expressed, to those of the Russian-American Convention of 1824. Article 3 of this English-Russian treaty of 1825 declares, "The line of demarcation between the possessions of the high contracting parties upon the coast of the Continent . . . shall be drawn in the manner following: commencing from the northernmost point of the Island called Prince of Wales Island, which point lies in the parallel of 54° 40′ north latitude, and between the 131st and 133d degree of west longitude . . . , the said line shall ascend to the north along the channel called Portland Channel, as far as the point of the continent where it strikes the 56th degree of north latitude. From this last mentioned point the line of demarcation shall follow the summit of the mountains situate parallel to the coast, as far as the point of intersection of the 141st degree of west longitude. . . . And, finally, from the said point of intersection, the said meridian line of the 141st degree, in its prolongation as far as the Frozen Ocean, shall form the limit between Russian and British possessions on the Continent of America." As this Russian-English treaty distinctly acknowledged that England owned the regions lying south of this line, it is practically a denial and, therefore, so far as Russia is concerned, an annulment of the Russian-American Convention of 1824, which rested upon the assumption that America owned the regions south of 54° 40′.—Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 343. Text of the Convention, *ibid.*, Appendix K, No. 5.

Mexico had agreed to a definition of her rights which confined her to the regions south of 42°; and Russia had voluntarily limited her sphere of influence to the districts north of 54° 40′. It remains, therefore, only to examine the origin, character, and extent of England's claims within the region west of the Rocky Mountains, and between the parallels 42° and 54° 40′.

During the years from 1577 to 1580, Elizabeth's daring sea-rover, Francis Drake, had entered the Pacific by way of the Strait of Magellan, in search of Spanish treasure, and had followed the Pacific coast of North America as far north as the 43d parallel.[1] He had spent some three weeks, anchored in "a fair and good bay, within 38 degrees," where "in the name and to the use of her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, he took the crown, sceptre and dignity, of the country into his own hands," calling the region New Albion; but this expedition had not given to his Queen a real title to the region, which had already been visited by Spanish vessels under Cabrillo and Ferrelo in 1543. More than two hundred years later, in the year 1776, the British Parliament offered a reward of twenty thousand pounds to any English commander who should discover any sea-passage between the Atlantic

[1] Two narratives contain all that is positively known concerning Drake's visit to the northwest coast of North America. The first is *The Famous Voyage of Sir Francis Drake into the South Sea, and there Hence, about the Whole Globe of the Earth; Begun in the Year of our Lord, 1577:* by Francis Pretty. The second is *The World Encompassed*, by Sir Francis Drake, collected out of the notes of Mr. Francis Fletcher.

and the Pacific, north of 52° of latitude.[1] The famous mariner, Captain James Cook, had just returned to England from his second voyage of circumnavigation, and his services were at once enlisted by the British Government for an expedition to search for such a strait. Upon reaching New Albion, Cook anchored in a spacious bay, in latitude 49° 33′ N.,[2] where he found signs which at first convinced him that this region had been before visited by Europeans. "Some accounts of a Spanish voyage to this coast in 1774 or 1775," he wrote,[3] "had reached England before I sailed; but . . . circumstances sufficiently prove that these ships had not been at Nootka." Careful study fully confirmed him in this opinion; and he took possession of the territory for England, having "honored" the inlet "with the name of King George's Sound."[4] He later discovered, however, that it was "called Nootka by the natives"; and it was the latter name that persisted, as did also the belief that Captain Cook was its first discoverer. Years passed before it became quite clear that the "accounts of a Spanish voyage to this coast in 1774," mentioned in Cook's *Journal*, were true, and that Perez had claimed it for his most

[1] This was not a new act, but an amended edition of an act of 1745. *General History of Voyages of Discovery*, by W. Desborough Cooley, vol. iii, 41. The edition which I have used is the French translation "par Ad. Joanne et Old-Nick." Paris, 1840.

[2] *The Voyages of Capt. James Cook, being his Journal of his Voyages.* Edition of John Tallis and Company, 1853, ii, 270. His mention of New Albion is on page 259.

[3] *Journal*, April, 1778.—*Ibid.*, 288.

[4] *Ibid.*, 270.

Catholic Majesty, on August 9, 1774.[1] This being true, the visit of Captain Cook in 1778 ceases to have any value as giving England a claim to the region.

The coast between Nootka Sound and Cape Mendocino was not explored by the vessels of any European nation, between the years 1778 and 1787[2]; but, in 1788, four years before Captain Gray discovered the Columbia River, an Englishman, John Meares, had "anchored in a Friendly Cove, in King George's Sound, abreast of the village of Nootka,"[3] and had made his headquarters at that point, from which vessels were sent to explore the coast southward to 45° and northward to 60°.[4] He had entered the Strait of Fuca, bringing back a striking picture of its beautiful entrance, had halted near the mouth of the Columbia River in search of an opening, and had then turned southward, convinced that no opening existed at that point. "The name Cape Disappointment," says Meares's Journal, "was given to the promontory, and the Bay obtained the title of Deception Bay."[5]

[1] Heceta, also a Spanish commander, had also visited it in 1775; but had not entered Nootka Sound. Cuadra, however, who had accompanied him in a small boat, had landed at three points between the parallels 47° and 58°, and had taken formal possession of the coast for Spain.—Bancroft's *Northwest Coast*, i, 158–166, and *History of California*, i, 241 *et seq.*, for full details.

[2] Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 167.

[3] Meares's Journal, May 17, 1788, page 104 of *Voyages Made in the Years 1788 and 1789 from China to the Northwest Coast of America*. By John Meares. Printed at the Logographic Press, London, 1790.

[4] *Ibid.*, 133. For map of the expeditions, see *ibid.*, i.

[5] *Ibid*, 167.

Thus, from Meares's own statement, it is evident that he did not see the Columbia River, or know of its existence,[1] yet the British Commissioners, in the negotiations of 1826, contended that Meares "had actually entered the Bay of the Columbia," adding, "if, therefore, any claim to these countries as between Great Britain and the United States is to be deduced from priority of discovery, the above exposition of dates and facts suffices to establish that claim in favor of Great Britain."[2]

This expedition of Meares is chiefly interesting as the cause of a controversy between England and Spain, out of which grew the Nootka Sound Convention of 1790,[3] the first international treaty concerning the northwest coast of America. Its third article provided that subjects of both nations

[1] This is not a remarkable oversight. Vancouver's Journal for April, 1792, thus describes his passage of the same point with Meares's description of the coast before him. "The sea had now changed from its natural, to river colored water; the probable consequence of some streams falling into the bay . . . Not considering this opening worthy of more attention, I continued our pursuit to the N. W."—Vancouver's *Voyage*, 1798 edition, i, 210.

[2] British statement annexed to the Protocol of December 16, 1826. Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., vi, 664. Vancouver's Journal, under date September, 1792, declares that "Captain Meares had sailed from Nootka in 1788, under the colors of Portugal, had a Portuguese captain with him on board, and was expected to return with him in the same vessel . . . which belonged to a merchant at Macao."—Vancouver's *Voyage*, 1798 edition, i, 390. The edition of Meares's own account cited above, however, bears clear evidence of the English character of the expedition. It is dedicated to Lord Hawkesbury, and contains a list of 350 subscribers, mostly English.

[3] Text and detailed examination of the negotiations leading to it, William Ray Manning's "The Nootka Sound Controversy," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, 1904, 279–478. A good bibliography is annexed to this essay.

should be free to navigate or fish in the Pacific, to land at places not already occupied, and trade with the natives; and even to make settlements in all unoccupied districts.[1] It even went farther, in the fifth article, providing that, "wherever the subjects of either of the two powers shall have made settlements since the month of April, 1789, or shall hereafter make any, the subjects of the other shall have free access, and shall carry on their trade without any disturbance or molestation."

The use which England later attempted to make of this Nootka Convention deprived her of the right to claim Oregon upon the basis of priority of discovery. "Whatever that title may have been," says the British statement annexed to the Protocol of December 16, 1826,[2] "either on the part of Great Britain or on the part of Spain, prior to the Convention of 1790, it was from thenceforward no longer to be traced in vague narratives of discoveries, . . . but in the text and stipulations of that Convention itself." This is a clear statement that, in England's opinion, all pretensions by either England or Spain, upon whatever ground they may have rested prior to the Nootka Convention of 1790, were definitely set at rest by that Convention.[3] By this statement she struck at the

[1] England was, however, to prevent all illicit trade with Spanish settlements. See Article 4.

[2] Text, Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., vi, 663.

[3] "Until the Nootka Sound Contest," wrote John Quincy Adams in 1823, "Great Britain had never advanced any claim to territory upon the Northwestern Coast of America by right of occupation."—Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., v, 792. Writing to Rush, on July 22, 1823, he declared that "the principles settled by the Nootka Convention"

American claim to Oregon as derived from Spain; but there were left, unimpaired, all claims based upon priority of discovery, priority of occupation, or contiguity. England's interpretation of the Nootka Convention, therefore, greatly strengthened the position of America, leaving the two nations exactly equal in so far as America had received the region from Spain by the Florida Purchase, but leaving America free to advance her claims derived from other sources, a resource which England had definitely abrogated for herself.

This abdication of all claims except those embodied "in the text and stipulations" of the Nootka Convention was not made by England until 1826; and, before that date, another joint occupation agreement had been entered into for the Oregon region, this time between England and the United States. Neither country then believed much in the value of the Oregon region; but both knew that the question of their relative rights and sovereignty there was so complicated as to be difficult to decide. At a diplomatic conference held in London in 1818, the general question of the Canadian-American boundary lines came under discussion. Regarding the territory west of the Lake of the Woods, Richard Rush and Albert Gallatin, the American negotiators, proposed a line from the northwestern extremity of that lake to the 49th parallel and along it to the Pacific.[1]

made it necessary that "the American Continents henceforth will no longer be subjects of colonization."—Monroe's *Writings*, vi, 356–357, for text.

[1] Articles annexed to Protocol of the Third Conference.—Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., iv, 383 *et seq.*, Article B.

The British Commissioners agreed to accept that line, "from the said Lake of the Woods to the Stony Mountains,"[1] but proceeded to debate the question of ownership west of the latter point. In this debate, the claims of each nation were set forth at length, the British Commissioners insisting that no agreement could be accepted which did not give England at least equal rights with the United States at the mouth of the Columbia.

To this the American Commissioners refused their assent,[2] and it was finally agreed to fix the boundary line, "from the Lake of the Woods to the Stony Mountains" at the 49th parallel[3]; but beyond the mountains no boundary line was agreed upon, it being decided "that any country that may be claimed by either party on the north-west coast of America, westward of the Stony Mountains, shall . . . be free and open, for the term of ten years," to subjects of both powers, "it being well understood that this agreement is not to be construed to the prejudice of any claim which either . . . may have to any part of the said country."[4]

From the end of Monroe's second term to the accession of James K. Polk, England and the United States debated, at set times and seasons, the question, how to divide this region between

[1] Five articles annexed to Protocol of Fifth Conference.—Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., iv, 390 *et seq.* See Article B.

[2] *Ibid.*, 393.

[3] Convention with Great Britain, Article 2.—Text, Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., iv, 406.

[4] *Ibid.*, Article 3.

themselves; and always their deliberations failed. The negotiations of 1826, however, while not accomplishing a partition of the territory, resulted in a new Convention[1] of joint occupancy of Oregon, which continued that of 1818 for an indefinite period, but with the proviso that either party might terminate such joint occupancy "on giving due notice of twelve months to the other." In each of these attempts at compromise, the American Commissioners had offered to accept the 49th parallel[2] as the boundary line; but, as this offer had not been accepted, Gallatin, acting upon specific instructions, finally declared "that the American Government does not hold itself bound hereafter, . . . to agree to the line which has been . . . proposed and rejected, but will consider itself at liberty to contend for the full extent of the claims of the United States."[3]

Thus matters stood when Andrew Jackson became President. Oregon was held in joint occupation by England and the United States, a joint occupation which might be terminated at any time by either party, after a formal notice of twelve months. The disputed region lay west of the Rocky Mountains, and between the 42d parallel and the parallel 54° 40′. It was falling more and more

[1] Text, *Treaties and Conventions Concluded between the United States and Other Powers since July 4, 1776*, 41st Congress, 3d Session, Senate Exec. Doc. No. 36. This treaty is on pages 364 and 365.

[2] In those of 1818 and 1826 they had also offered the free navigation of the Columbia south of 49°.—Polk's First Annual Message, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 393.

[3] Statement annexed to Protocol of the Eighth Conference.—Text, Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., vi, 676.

under the control of the Hudson's Bay Company, which seemed destined to transform it into a British province, unless some occurrence should rouse the Americans to this danger, and convince them of the value of the district.

The question of the ownership of Oregon practically escaped President Jackson's all-pervasive activity. Just before his inauguration, the House had rejected a bill authorizing the President to garrison the Oregon territory, in order to prevent its complete occupation by Great Britain; and, for many years thereafter, the Oregon question was little mentioned in Washington.

During Tyler's Administration, however, Senator Benton became possessed by the idea, "America from sea to sea"; and other imperialists, who could not bring themselves to the point of shouting for the annexation of the slave territory of Texas, rallied eagerly to the cry of "the whole of Oregon." Since 1837, the flow of American immigration to Oregon had been increasing; but, by 1842, it had become a veritable river.[1] Oregon colonization societies had, for four or five years past, been urging the Federal government to settle the question of sovereign ownership in the region, either by

[1] Farnham gives the total population of Oregon in 1839 as about twenty thousand, "of whom about 150 are Americans."—Farnham's *Travels in the Great Western Prairies* (Thwaites's *Early Western Travels*, xxix, 99).

In 1843, the immigration was so large that it attracted national attention, and became the topic around which later grew up the so-called "Legend of Marcus Whitman." In 1845, about three thousand immigrants entered the Oregon region from the States.—Palmer's *Journal*, (Thwaites's *Early Western Travels*, xxx, 29).

negotiation or by military occupation. Bills for the accomplishment of one or both of these ends were frequently introduced into both Houses of Congress; and the State Department, the War Department, and the Department of the Navy were busy gathering information as to the value of the region, and systematizing existing proofs of American ownership. Information thus obtained was, from time to time, published by Congress[1]; but no bill regarding Oregon actually passed either House before 1842.[2]

On April 4th of that year, when Lord Ashburton arrived at Washington to open negotiations with Secretary Webster, of the State Department, concerning the question of disputed boundaries, it was generally felt that at last the Oregon question was to be decided. But when the Webster-Ashburton treaty was announced,[3] making no allusion to the lands west of the Rockies,[4] although clearly defining the American boundary line from the Bay of Fundy to the Lake of the Woods,[5] excitement

[1] Robert Greenhow's *Memoir, Historical and Political, on the Northwest Coast of North America*, which was the first draft of the same author's valuable work on Oregon and California, was one of these documents. For mention of others, see Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 1845 edition, 377, note.

[2] Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 377.

[3] Text, *Treaties and Conventions Concluded between the United States of America and Other Powers since July 4, 1776*, Government Printing Office, 1889, 432–439.

[4] It is often asserted that this question was neglected because Ashburton's powers did not cover it. That this is not true is shown by the fact that, in December, 1841, Lord Aberdeen had informed Edward Everett that Lord Ashburton had "full powers to settle the boundary and all other questions."—Webster's *Works*, 1853 edition, vol. vi, 270.

[5] A boundary line east of the Lake of the Woods had been previously

visibly increased.[1] Tyler's plan, as we now know, was to gain Texas and California by bartering Oregon. England, Mexico, and the United States were to enter upon a tripartite treaty, to secure the independence of Texas and the cession of California to the United States, in return for the line of the Columbia River as the boundary of our territory in Oregon,[2] the full title to which Tyler later asserted, in his Third Annual Message, in these unequivocal terms: "After the most rigid and, as far as practicable, unbiassed examination of the subject, the United States have always contended that their rights [in Oregon] appertain to the entire region of country lying on the Pacific and embraced within 42° and 54° 40′ of north latitude."[3] In his next message to Congress,[4] he declared, "It became manifest, at an early hour of the late negotiations, that any attempt, for the time being, satisfactorily to determine those rights, would lead to a protracted discussion, which might embrace

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marked out by a Commission, appointed under the provisions of the treaty of Ghent, under the direction of Major Joseph Delafield. See Amer. State Papers, Foreign Rels., v, 64–68, for correspondence.

[1] A letter from Andrew Jackson to Major Wm. B. Lewis, dated September 18, 1843 (Ford MSS.), savagely attacks Webster's conduct in the negotiations. England's object, he says, "in stopping our northwestern boundary at the Rocky Mountains, connected with her becoming the mediator between Texas and Mexico . . . disclosed to me her illicit intentions, to claim Oregon and obtain an undue influence in Texas." See also Benton's *Thirty Years' View*, ii, 476.

[2] *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, ii, 260–261.

[3] Tyler's Third Annual Message, December, 1843.—Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 258.

[4] Second Annual Message, December 6, 1842.—Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 194, *et seq.*

in its failure other more pressing matters." He expressed his determination, however, to urge on Great Britain the importance of an early settlement of the Oregon question; and this statement was enough to encourage the Oregon enthusiasts to make plans for a veritable crusade. Senator Linn of Missouri[1] took the lead by introducing into the Senate a bill, authorizing "the adoption of measures for the occupation and settlement of the territory of Oregon."[2] The bill proposed large land grants to white settlers, who would cultivate them during five consecutive years[3]; the extension of American courts to the disputed region, 42° to 54° 40′; the construction of a line of forts reaching from the Missouri and the Arkansas rivers to the mouth of the Columbia; and boldly asserted the absolute right of the United States "to all the territories west of the Rocky Mountains, between the latitudes of 42 degrees and 54 degrees 40 minutes." Upon this bill, debate raged, its opponents declaring it impolitic in spirit, and directly contrary to the British-American Convention of 1827, which could not

[1] On June 4, 1840, Senator Linn had laid before the Senate a petition, signed by sixty-seven Oregon settlers, most of them Americans, asking for American protection from the Hudson's Bay Company.—Farnham's *Travels* (Thwaites's *Early Western Voyages*, vol. xxix, 23). It was Linn also, according to Rev. H. H. Spalding, who introduced Dr. Marcus Whitman to President Tyler.—Eells' *Reply to Professor Bourne's "The Whitman Legend,"* 72.

[2] Details, Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 378.

[3] The granting of lands, urged Mr. Berrien, not for a period but for "as long as the grass shall grow or the waters shall flow," cannot be fairly considered as consistent with the agreement of joint occupancy. —*Ibid.*, 385.

be abrogated except by a twelve months' notice. Linn hotly replied that that Convention had been already violated by the encroachments of the Hudson's Bay Company which, he declared, had already taken possession of practically the whole of the disputed region, supposed to be under joint occupation. England, he said, has "extended her jurisdiction over Oregon, has built forts, and set up farming and other establishments. Why cannot the Americans do the same?"

Mr. Sevier went even farther in his defense of the plan, suggesting that a railroad be built from the Missouri to the Columbia, in order to transport the pioneers of American sovereignty into Oregon with more expedition. Thomas H. Benton declared himself prepared for war, if war were necessary to defend our undoubted right to the Oregon country; while John C. Calhoun felt that the bill violated the Convention of 1827, and would inevitably cause a breach of the existing peace with Great Britain, if carried into effect. As to the value of Oregon, Mr. Calhoun was clear. Its possession would be of great importance to the Union; but the natural tide of westward migration, already risen high, would in time secure its possession without the risk of a war with England.

On February 3, 1843, Linn's bill passed the Senate, 34 to 22, the preamble, asserting the right of the United States to all territory west of the Rockies and between the 42d degree and the parallel 54° 40′, having been stricken out. The bill was then sent to the House; but the session was near its

close and it did not come up for discussion.[1] It is doubtless fortunate that this bill was not enacted into law, for its provisions were clearly in contravention of the Convention of 1827, and its enforcement, as Lord Palmerston frankly declared at the time, would have meant war with England.[2]

Meanwhile, the consciousness that Congress was awakening to the importance of the Oregon country had given a new impetus to immigration. In June, 1843, about a thousand American immigrants,[3] with two hundred wagons, a large herd of horses and cattle, and a regular colonizing outfit, started from Westport, Missouri, bound for Oregon, while the people of Europe were comfortably reading an article in the *Edinburgh Review*[4] which declared that, "Oregon will never be colonized overland from the Eastern States. . . . Whoever . . . is to be the future owner of Oregon, its people will come from Europe."[5]

In closing his masterly monograph upon the

[1] Greenhow's *Oregon and California*, 379 and 388. [2] *Ibid.*, 391.

[3] At this point in the history of the Oregon question appears the long controversy over Marcus Whitman and his part in saving Oregon. A fair idea of the two opposing views may be secured by reading Professor Bourne's *The Legend of Marcus Whitman*, and Myron Eells' *A Reply to Professor Bourne*. Barrow's *Oregon*, Wm. A Mowry's *Marcus Whitman*, and Wm. I. Marshall's *Marcus Whitman*, add little of interest.

[4] "Mexico and the Great Western Prairies," *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1843, vol. lxxviii, pp. 191–192.

[5] In 1845, almost three thousand Americans entered the Oregon region. The country was divided into eight counties, and a code of laws was adopted by the American settlers to serve as a government, "until such time as the United States shall extend jurisdiction over them."—Palmer's Journal of 1845–1846 (Thwaites's *Early Western Voyages*, xxx, 213–215). The text of these laws will be found on pages 299–311 of the same volume.

Oregon and California region, Robert Greenhow declares, "American citizens, relying on the justice of the claims of their republic to the countries of the Columbia, are removing thither in great numbers; and it becomes the duty of their government, which has always asserted and supported those claims, to provide for their protection and secure enjoyment of the fruits of their labor, by measures entirely incompatible with the stipulations of the subsisting convention."[1] With such a settlement in view, he adds, "Great Britain has been again invited to a negotiation, . . . the invitation has been accepted, and the Hon. Richard Pakenham has arrived at Washington, as Minister Plenipotentiary from that government."

Such was the status of the Oregon question when the Democratic National Convention assembled at Baltimore (May 27, 1844), and nominated James K. Polk for President; and it is clear that, whatever we may think of the legal justice of the cry, "54° 40′ or fight," the Democratic party did not misjudge the temper of the American people when it inscribed that motto upon the party banner.

In August of that same year, Mr. Pakenham offered to divide the Oregon territory by a line following the 49th parallel from the Rocky Mountains to its intersection with the northeasternmost branch of the Columbia, and down that river to the sea, leaving the navigation of the Columbia free to both parties. This proposition was rejected on the

[1] *Oregon and California*, 403.

very day it was made, and when James K. Polk entered the White House, on March 4, 1845, he found the English Minister waiting for the United States, in her turn, to propose some terms for the settlement of the question. Polk's warlike inaugural address could have offered him little hope that his recent proposals would ever be accepted. It will become "my duty," the new President declared, "to assert and maintain by all constitutional means the right of the United States to that portion of our territory which lies beyond the Rocky Mountains. Our title to the country of the Oregon is clear and unquestionable and already are our people preparing to perfect that title by occupying it with their wives and children."[1] He, however, had not been many weeks in office before he began to feel "pressure" which induced him to offer England the line of 49°, but without the surrender of the free navigation of the Columbia. This suggestion was rejected by Pakenham, "in terms not very courteous," and Polk withdrew his offer,[2] at the same time expressing his intention to "re-affirm Mr. Monroe's ground against permitting any European power to plant or establish any new colony on the North American Continent."[3] This statement evidently meant that, unless England disarmed him by a reasonable proposition which he could take to the people, he

[1] Text, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 381.

[2] Message of December 2, 1845, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 394. Also Polk's *Diary*, i, 62, 63, 69.

[3] Polk's *Diary*, i, 64.

would carry out his party cry of "Fifty-four forty or fight."

On October 24, 1845, in conference with Benton, it was agreed that the twelve months' notice, the necessary preliminary for abrogation of the Convention of 1827, should be given,[1] and that the route to Oregon should be adequately protected, so as to aid American immigration. Polk asserted his conviction that England had her eye on California and intended to possess it, and that it was this knowledge, quite as much as the Oregon question, which was causing him to consider the advisability of reasserting the Monroe Doctrine.[2] Benton was of the opinion that England had a title to Fraser's River by virtue of discovery, exploration, and settlement, which was precisely the kind of title by which we claimed the Columbia River.[3] To deny her the right of further colonization in that district under the Monroe Doctrine or any other doctrine, therefore, appeared to him unwarranted. He admitted that, by acquiring the Spanish title, we had gained a clear title to Vancouver's Island and the coast; but declared that such title could hardly extend to Fraser's River, as the Spaniards had not known of its existence. Polk's opinion was that that point could only be settled by the law of nations, which must decide just "how far the discovery and possession of the coast would give Spain a title to the adjoining country in the interior."[4]

Thus, while disagreeing as to the right of the

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 70.
[2] *Ibid.*, October 24, 1845, i, 71.
[3] *Ibid.*, 70–71.
[4] *Ibid.*, 71.

United States to extend the Monroe Doctrine to the Fraser's River region, Benton and Polk substantially agreed that "no foreign power ought to be permitted to colonize California,"[1] Mexico, as the power already in possession, being of course excepted. Buchanan, who had been "most anxious to settle the dispute on the parallel 49°,"[2] now "manifested a disposition to be warlike," a change which Polk uncharitably ascribes to his Presidential aspirations, and his desire "to supersede General Cass before the country."[3] The President himself, while not distinctly "warlike," remained true to his first decision, to make no new proposition, but to leave the initiative to be taken by the British Minister.

Meanwhile, Pakenham, confronted by a stubbornness which he had scarcely anticipated, had begun to hint at arbitration and at last, late in December, ventured openly to propose that means of adjustment of the whole question.[4] By unanimous consent of the Cabinet, this proposition was rejected,[5] and Polk continued firm in his refusal to make any advance.[6]

Meanwhile, John C. Calhoun was undergoing an astonishing change of heart on the question. On December 22d, in conversation with Polk,[7] he had freely "expressed his desire to assert our rights in

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 71. [2] *Ibid.*, 76. [3] *Ibid.*, 297.

[4] Submitted in writing, December 27, 1845.—Polk's *Diary*, i, 148–149.

[5] Polk's *Diary*, i, 147–151, for details.

[6] For Buchanan's efforts to induce Polk to make a new proposition, see *ibid.*, i, 122–123.

[7] *Ibid.*, i, 132.

Oregon,"[1] but two months later he was as eager to have the question compromised on the 49th parallel, and to have the United States intimate that, if England should offer this settlement, it would be accepted.[2] He even called upon the President and suggested this course of procedure.[3] Polk answered that, should such a proposition come from England, he would probably submit it to the Senate; but that he would not himself again propose it. Should it be coupled, however, he declared, with the free navigation of the Columbia, it could not be accepted.[4]

In the meantime the question of giving England the twelve months' notice precedent to the abrogation of the joint occupancy had occupied the attention of Congress, Polk having ardently insisted that such notice should be given without delay.[5]

The House acted first, by passing an act authorizing the notice.[6] The Senate, on April 16, 1846,

[1] From this conversation, says Polk's *Diary* (i, 132), "the impression left on my mind is very strongly that Mr. Calhoun will be very soon in opposition to my Administration."

[2] *Ibid.*, i, 248. Calhoun even considered the question of himself bringing before the Senate a resolution advising this course.—*Ibid.*, 246.

[3] *Ibid.*, 249.

[4] *Ibid.*, i, 256. A few days later, however, on March 11, 1846, Polk told Benton that, while he "would never surrender the perpetual free navigation" of the Columbia, he might submit to the Senate a proposition fixing the boundary at approximately 49°, and giving England the navigation of the Columbia for "a term of seven or ten years."—*Ibid.*, i, 287.

[5] *Ibid.*, i, 289. This view he reiterates in his Message of March 24, 1846.—Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 427.

[6] Full text of House resolution, passed February 9, 1846, by a vote of 163 to 54, Chase's *History of the Polk Administration*, 45, note.

agreed to the bill but with an amendment;[1] and President Polk confided to his Diary, that the House resolution had suited him, and the Senate amendment mildly displeased him. "But still," he adds, "it authorized the notice . . . and that was the main object."[2]

The Senate amendments, however, pleased the House even less than they had pleased the President, and a deadlock and Committee of Conference resulted. In the agreement finally reached, the President was authorized, "at his discretion," to announce that, in one year's time, the Convention of joint occupation of the Oregon territory of August 6, 1827, would be no longer valid.[3]

President Polk accepted this result as a personal victory, but was still deaf to the insistent demand, made by McDuffie of South Carolina[4] and others, that the notice authorized by Congress be coupled with "a renewal of the American offer of 49°." His firmness was soon rewarded, for, on June 6, 1846, James Buchanan submitted to the Cabinet the British protocol on the Oregon question.[5] It proposed that the Oregon territory be divided by the 49th parallel from the Rockies to the Straits of Fuca, and thence by a line following the main

[1] Amended form passed by Senate, by a vote of 40 to 14.—Chase's *History of the Polk Administration*, 46.

[2] *Diary*, i, 334.

[3] There were only 10 dissenting votes in the Senate, and 46 in the House.—Polk's *Diary*, i, 347–353. Text of resolution as finally agreed to, Chase's *History of the Polk Administration*, 48.

[4] April 24, 1846, Polk's *Diary*, i, 348.

[5] *Ibid.*, i, 451.

channel of those straits to the sea. British titles south of the 49th parallel were to remain valid under the United States, and the navigation of the Columbia was to remain free and open to the Hudson's Bay Company, and to British subjects engaged in trading with that Company, but not to British subjects generally.[1]

On June 10, Polk sent to the Senate a message,[2] throwing upon that body the responsibility of deciding whether to accept or reject this proposal; and, on June 12, 1846, at "about six o'clock," writes Polk,[3] "the Secretary of the Senate called, and delivered to me a resolution of the Senate, passed . . . with the concurrence of two thirds of the Senators present, advising me 'to accept the proposal of the British Government . . . for the settlement of the Oregon question.' "[4]

The final treaty of partition was concluded and signed by Buchanan and Pakenham on June 15, 1846,[5] the terms "being the same submitted by the latter on the sixth instant, by me submitted to the Senate for their advice on the 10th instant, and by that body advised on the 12th instant."[6] It was ratified by the Senate on June

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 452.

[2] June 10, 1846.—Text, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 449 *et seq.*

[3] *Diary*, i, 467.

[4] The vote was Ayes 38, Noes 12.—*Ibid.*

[5] Text, *Treaties and Conventions Concluded between the United States of America and Other Powers since July 4, 1776*, Government Printing Office, 1889, pp. 438–439.

[6] Polk's *Diary*, i, 471.

18, 1846,[1] and with its ratification British relations ceased to embarrass the American nation, which was thus left free to devote its energies to Mexico.

[1] By a vote of 41 to 14, every Senator voting except Mr. Jarnegan. —Polk's *Diary*, i, 479. The boundary line is defined in Article I as "westward along the . . . 49th parallel . . . to the middle of the channel which separates the continent from Vancouver's Island; and thence southerly through the middle of the said channel, and of Fuca's Straits, to the Pacific Ocean."

CHAPTER V

THE DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST MEXICO

1845–1846.

UPON the announcement that Tyler had signed the joint resolution annexing Texas, the Mexican Minister, Almonte, acting upon previous instructions, demanded his passports,[1] thus, by the deliberate action of Mexico, suspending all diplomatic relations between the two countries[2]; and Brigadier-General Zachary Taylor, in obedience to orders already received,[3] put his army in motion for New Orleans en route for the Mexican frontier. At New Orleans, the following supplementary orders awaited him[4]: "This Department is informed that Mexico has some military establishments on the east side of the Rio Grande . . . in actual occupancy of her troops. . . . You will carefully avoid any acts of aggression, unless an actual state of war should exist."

[1] Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 388.

[2] Mr. Shannon, our Minister to Mexico, was refused official intercourse, and retired to the United States.

[3] Dated June 15, 1845.—Text, Brooks's *History of the Mexican War*, 56–57.

[4] Dated July 8, 1845.—Text, *ibid.*, 58.

Thus matters stood, Taylor preparing his little army for an advance to the Texas frontier, and the American nation waiting anxiously for the reply of Texas which, it was instinctively felt, would precipitate hostilities. On July 7, 1845, that reply came, and John Quincy Adams recorded the fact in his diary in words[1] of profound depression, almost of despair: "We have the first news that the Congress of Texas, assembled on the seventeenth of last month, immediately and by unanimous votes of both Houses, accepted the terms prescribed by the joint resolution of the Congress of the United States of the first of March last for annexing Texas to the United States. . . . If the voice of the people is the voice of God, this measure has now the sanction of Almighty God. I have opposed it for ten long years, firmly believing it tainted with two deadly crimes, (I), the leprous contamination of slavery, and (II), robbery of Mexico. Victrix causa Deo placuit. The sequel is in the hands of Providence, and the ultimate result may signally disappoint those by whom this enterprise has been consummated."

On July 21, 1845, General Taylor received, at New Orleans, a dispatch from Major Donelson, American Chargé d'Affaires in Texas, announcing that Texas had accepted the proffered terms of annexation.[2] As this was the signal, designated in his orders of June 15th, for the landing of American

[1] *Memoirs*, xii, 201–202.

[2] See Taylor's letter of July 28, 1845.—J. Reese Fry's *Zachary Taylor*, 76–77.

troops on the "western frontier of Texas," Taylor at once embarked his "Army of Occupation," designing "to take position in the country between the Nueces and the Del Norte, and to repel any invasion of the Texas territory which might be attempted."[1]

The die was cast and the American nation had begun its imperial march westward, a march destined to be arrested, not at the Rio Grande, not at the "Golden Gate"—perhaps not even at the coral reefs of the Pacific, where the gallant Magellan so long ago laid down his life in that first European conflict with the savages of the Philippines.

Taylor's orders were, "to commit no act of hostility against Mexico, unless she declared war, or was herself the aggressor by striking the first blow,"[2] the exact meaning of which phrase, is thus defined, in a proposition which Polk submitted to his Cabinet on August 29, 1845[3]: "Crossing the Del Norte by a Mexican army in force shall be regarded as an act of war on her part and in that event General Taylor . . . [is] ordered, if he shall deem it advisable, not to wait to be attacked but to attack her army first."

On July 31st, the "Army of Occupation" took up its quarters at Corpus Christi, near the mouth of the Nueces River,[4] where for the next seven

[1] Message, December 2, 1845.—Richardson, iv, 388. Full text of the orders sent by Acting Secretary of War, George Bancroft, Brooks's *History of the Mexican War*, 56–57.

[2] Richardson, iv, 389.

[3] Polk's *Diary*, i, 9.

[4] Taylor's Dispatch of October 4, 1845.—Fry's *Taylor*, 80–81.

months it remained inactive,[1] awaiting the fulfillment of Mexico's threat, that "the Mexican Government is resolved to declare war as soon as it receives intimation of such an act"[2] as annexation.

In sending Taylor to the front, President Polk acted upon the time-honored maxim, "In time of peace prepare for war"[3]; and, in the same spirit, as early as June 24th, Commodore Sloat had been ordered to hold the United States vessels in the Pacific in readiness for the seizure of San Francisco the instant Mexico should declare war; and Commodore Conner, commanding the Home Squadron in the Gulf of Mexico, had been instructed, "upon hearing that war existed . . . to blockade all Mexican ports on the Gulf, to attack and take them if deemed practicable, except of Yucatan and Tobasco," which Departments were reported to have refused "to take part in the threatened war against Texas or the United States."[4]

[1] *Taylor and his Generals*, 41.

[2] General Almonte, Mexican Minister at Washington, to Secretary Upshur, November 3, 1843.—Text quoted, Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 16. See also *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 229, and Niles, lxv, 266–268.

[3] That Mexico would become the aggressor appeared likely, from a report having "an appearance of authority not to be disregarded, that the Mexicans are approaching the frontier of Texas in considerable force, that General Paredes, with 7000 men, is at San Luis Potosi, and that General Arista, with 3000, principally cavalry, is in a position on or near the Rio del Norte, and that these troops are destined for the invasion of Texas, with or without a declaration of war with the United States."—E. A. Rhodes to E. Allen, August 21, 1845. *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 392. For Allen's reply, see *ibid.*, 395–397.

[4] Polk's *Diary*, i, 10. See also Polk's Message of December 2, 1845. Richardson, iv, 388 and 389.

But, in spite of these war preparations, Polk was desirous of peace, if peace could be maintained without either sacrificing our just demands, or endangering the Monroe Doctrine, which he conceived to be seriously threatened by England's ambitious designs with reference to the California region.[1]

By the phrase, "our just demands," Polk meant our claim to the Texas for which Jackson had so long struggled, and which comprehended all that part of the Louisiana Purchase which had been surrendered to Spain in the treaty of 1819.[2] Texas, in that sense, certainly extended to the Rio Grande.[3] This was the Texas described in the act of the Texan Congress, passed December 19, 1836, for the purpose of making clear her own

[1] On October 24, 1845, Polk declared to Benton that Great Britain "had her eye" on California, and "intended to possess it if she could; but that the people of the United States would not willingly permit California to pass into the possession of any new colony planted by Great Britain, or any foreign monarchy."—Polk's *Diary*, i, 71.

In his Message of December 2, 1845, in explaining the course of events concerning Mexico, Polk wrote, "Our policy is not only peace with all, but good will toward all the powers of the earth."—Richardson, iv, 402.

[2] An entry in Polk's *Diary* (i, 130), shows that Polk had inherited Jackson's view of John Quincy Adams's part in the negotiation of the Florida treaty of 1819. Polk had sent Bancroft to ascertain whether Mr. Adams would accept an invitation to dine at the White House, should one be extended. Mr. Adams replied that he could not accept such hospitality, until Polk should retract a letter in which he had attacked Mr. Adams's conduct in the negotiation of that treaty. I told Bancroft, writes Polk, that "certainly I had no explanation to make, . . . that my statements . . . were correct, and were substantiated by the public records of the country." The text of the letter in question is in Jenkins's *Polk*, 120–123.

[3] Henry Adams's *History of the United States*, ii, 294, and iii, 40. For Polk's view, see Inaugural Address, Richardson, iv, 379.

claims[1]; and, until some other boundaries should be assigned it, either by act of Congress, or by treaty between the United States and Mexico, it was the sworn duty of President Polk to defend every foot of it.[2]

By "our just demands," President Polk meant, further, the payment of certain unadjusted claims against Mexico, which, in December, 1845, were officially estimated at $6,465,464. These claims had been submitted to arbitration; but Mexico had failed to make the payments ordered by the Commission.[3] These facts, in connection with the fear, perhaps inherited from Jackson, perhaps due

[1] Text, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 598–599, and Gammel's *Laws of Texas*, i, 1193–1194.

[2] On September 6, 1845, James Buchanan, Polk's Secretary of State, wrote, "The moment that the Convention of Texas had ratified the terms of annexation, . . . the substantial engagements of both parties were complete. . . . The President has, accordingly, . . . determined to defend it [Texas] against the forces of Mexico."—Buchanan to Lee, *Texas Diplomatic Correspondence*, ii, 399.

[3] In his first Annual Message (Richardson, iv, 389 *et seq.*), Polk had outlined the history of these claims, the justice of which Mexico had freely admitted. On April 11, 1839, a treaty of indemnity had been concluded and ratified by both Governments, with a view to the settlement of these claims. A joint commission had been created to adjust them, and had met at Washington on August 25, 1840. It had adjudged $2,026,139.68 in favor of the United States; and other claims, aggregating three or four millions, had been presented to it, but too late to be acted upon at the time. Mexico had asked, and the United States had generously granted, indulgence in time of payment. For a while thereafter, interest had been paid, but it had finally been discontinued.—See Buchanan to Slidell, Nov. 10, 1845. Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, p. 74.

A treaty looking to the settlement of claims left undecided by the first joint commission had been concluded and signed at Mexico on November 20, 1843, but, though ratified by the United States, it had "not yet received the ratification of the Mexican Government."

to his own observations, that England was planning the absorption of California, sufficiently explain Polk's injudicious announcement, that one of the four leading policies of his administration was to be the acquisition of that province.[1]

Few historians of the present generation follow the ancient Abolitionist view, so skillfully presented by James Russell Lowell in the *Biglow Papers*, that President Polk was aiming to steal "bigger pens to cram with slaves,"[2] a view which must be abandoned by any one who carefully studies Polk's diary and the records of his Cabinet meetings.

[1] On May 30, 1846, Polk declared to his Cabinet his full intention, with reference to territorial acquisitions. "I declared my purpose," he says (*Diary*, i, 438), "to be to acquire for the United States, California, New Mexico, and perhaps some others of the Northern Provinces of Mexico, whenever a peace was made. In Mr. Slidell's secret instructions last autumn, these objects were included. . . ." In these views the Cabinet concurred. To Buchanan, as early as May 13, 1846, he had declared his intention of securing California.—See *Diary*, i, 397.

[2] The *Biglow Papers*, as the author frankly says in the Introduction to the Second Series, were written in the belief that the Mexican War was "a national crime committed in behalf of slavery." They appeared during the progress of the war, and have done much toward creating the unfavorable view which subsequent generations have taken of that conflict. Mr. Lowell himself, however, seems to have modified his views as the years passed, for he wrote, a dozen years after the end of the war, "We had as just ground for it as a strong nation ever has against a weak one."—Scudder's *Life of Lowell*, i, 257.

In an article published in the *Report of the Massachusetts Historical Society* for May, 1912, Mr. Justin H. Smith of Boston, a careful student of the period, declares frankly the opinion, that the *Biglow Papers* "embodied a very incorrect view of the genesis of the war, undervalued the Union, belittled the destiny of the Nation, made light of authority, both military and civil, encouraged a disintegrating sectionalism, pointed with scorn at our national uniform, and appealed to a narrow self-interest wholly incompatible with good citizenship, either in war or in peace." Yet the American nation has allowed the history of that war to take the tone of these papers.

With his obligation for the settlement of our demands clearly in mind, and yet with an honest desire to maintain peace between the two nations, Polk sent William S. Parrott as his special agent to Mexico, to restore diplomatic relations with that country.[1] In a dispatch of August 29th, Parrott expressed the opinion that Mexico would neither declare war against the United States nor invade Texas, all her force being required to prevent another revolution. He also expressed his conviction that a Minister from the United States would be received; and this view was confirmed by independent dispatches from the American Consuls at the Mexican capital and at Vera Cruz.[2]

Upon the basis of these opinions, and after consultation with his Cabinet, Polk decided to send John Slidell, of New Orleans, as Minister to Mexico. The mission was to have as its great object the adjustment of a permanent boundary line between the United States and Mexico; and, while accomplishing this, Slidell was to negotiate the purchase of Upper California and New Mexico. In the Cabinet discussion concerning Slidell's instructions, Polk declared, and the Cabinet unanimously sustained the opinion, that to secure a boundary of the Del Norte from its mouth to the El Paso, and thence west to the Pacific, he

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 33, note.

[2] John Black of New York, and F. M. Diamond of Rhode Island, in dispatches dated, respectively, August 23d, and August 30th.—*Ibid.*, i, 33 and 34.

would be willing to pay as much as forty millions of dollars.[1]

Before the instructions for Slidell were formally drawn, however, news arrived that the President of Mexico had issued a circular, breathing hostility toward the United States, and that General Anastasio Bustamente had been chosen to command the armies of Mexico. These facts appeared to throw doubt upon the reports concerning the peaceful disposition of the Mexican Government, and Polk suggested that it might be discreet to delay the departure of Mr. Slidell, until further news should be received.[2] Through our Consul in Mexico, an inquiry was made[3] as to whether the Mexican Government "would receive an envoy from the United States, instructed with full powers to adjust all questions in dispute between the two Governments." The Mexican Minister gave an affirmative answer, asking that the naval force at Vera Cruz be withdrawn pending the contemplated negotiations.[4] Buchanan therefore prepared Slidell's instructions, carefully guarding the fact of their preparation, lest the English and French Ministers should learn of them and "thwart the objects of the mission."[5] Before they were delivered, Parrott arrived from Mexico bringing

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 34 and 35. Slidell's Instructions, however, speak of $25,000,000 as the maximum sum.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, pp. 71–80.

[2] *Ibid.*, i, 36.

[3] October 13, 1845. See Polk's Message of May 11, 1846.—Richardson, iv, 438.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Polk's *Diary*, i, 91.

with him "the original note of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, . . . agreeing to receive a Minister from the United States,"[1] which document destroyed the last doubt as to the wisdom of dispatching the Minister. The next day, therefore, President Polk "signed the commission of the Hon. John Slidell as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Mexico," with full power to adjust both boundary and indemnity questions.[2] He was to purchase California and New Mexico, thereby thwarting the ambitious designs of England, and furnishing Mexico with the means of adjusting the American claims against her; but the later correspondence between Slidell and Polk clearly shows that this was not an ultimatum. What Polk did consider an ultimatum is clearly shown in his message of May 11, 1846,[3] in which he declared that, as the country between the Rio del Norte and the Nueces "had been represented in the Congress, and in the Convention of Texas, [and] had thus taken part in the act of annexation itself, and is now included within one of our Congressional Districts," it was necessary for us "to provide for the defence of that portion of our country." Less than that, Polk could not properly have demanded, as Congress, the maker of the laws which he was sworn to enforce, had, "with great unanimity, by the act approved December 31,

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 93.

[2] *Ibid.*, i, 94. See also Polk's Message of May 11, 1846—Richardson, iv, 438. Text of Slidell's Instructions, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, pp. 71–80.

[3] Text, Richardson, iv, 440.

1845," recognized it specifically as a part of the United States, and had included it within our revenue system, the Senate having confirmed the appointment of a revenue officer to reside therein. That region, from the point of view of the American Executive and the Congress which had taken such action, could not be considered as debatable ground; and whatever else might be required of Slidell, it was made perfectly clear that he must secure to America undisputed sovereignty over it.

Under normal conditions, Slidell would have been received at the City of Mexico; but, upon his arrival, he found conditions far from normal. The Government of President Herrera was threatened with the revolution which, before the end of the year was to make General Paredes Military Dictator of the nation.[1] To receive Slidell, or open negotiations with the United States, Herrera feared, would precipitate the trouble, while to reject him would probably cause General Taylor to advance with his army. Herrera therefore temporized, and, "upon the most frivolous pretexts," refused to accredit Slidell. Even this caution, however, could not save him; and, on December 30, 1845, he was obliged to resign his office, and General Paredes assumed control of the Mexican Government.

Knowing that the military government which Paredes had set up was dependent, for its continuance, upon the good will of the army, and that the sum of money which he was empowered to place at the disposal of the new ruler would greatly

[1] Chase's *History of the Polk Administration*, 118, for details.

strengthen his hold upon that body, Slidell now felt so confident of the success of his mission that he sent home a dispatch, declaring that he would probably be received by the new government.[1] This suggested to Polk's mind that the boundaries and concessions which he so much desired might be the more readily obtained, if he could arrange for the payment of a considerable sum of money to General Paredes, as soon as it should become evident that the concessions were to be made. He, therefore, turned to the task of securing a generous appropriation from Congress, "without exposing to the public and to foreign governments" the purposes for which it was to be employed.[2]

While he was attempting to secure in advance the support of Benton, Cass, Allen, Calhoun, and other influential leaders, for this secret appropriation, dispatches arrived from Slidell conveying the tidings that his mission had been rejected, and that he had demanded his passports.[3] "Thus," Polk indignantly declared,[4] "the Government of Mexico, though solemnly pledged . . . to receive and accredit an American Envoy, violated their plighted faith and refused the offer of a peaceful adjustment of our difficulties." They have "refused all negotiation, and have made no proposition of any kind."

[1] Received by Polk on March 28, 1846.—Polk's *Diary*, i, 306.

[2] These, as Polk frankly declares in his *Diary* (i, 307), were, "to procure a cession of New Mexico and California, and if possible all north of latitude 32° from the El Paso or the Del Norte and west to the Pacific Ocean or . . . at all events to include all the country east of the Del Norte and the bay of San Francisco."

[3] Polk's *Diary*, i, 322.

[4] Message of May 11, 1846.—Richardson, iv, 437.

This utter failure of all that had been hoped for in Slidell's mission did not find the Administration unprepared for more heroic methods. On January 13, 1846, Secretary Marcy had ordered General Taylor to "advance and occupy . . . positions on or near the east bank of the Rio del Norte" (Rio Grande), there to act only upon the defensive, until Mexico should commit some "open act of hostility towards us."[1] The rejection of Slidell could not be regarded as an "open act of hostility," although it seemed little less to President Polk, who, on April 7th, had told his Cabinet[2] that, should Slidell fail, he would be disposed to urge Congress to "take the remedy for the injuries and wrongs we had suffered into our own hands."[3]

The final rejection of Slidell occurred on March 12th, and, on that same day, the "Army of Occupation" began its weary march[4] across the one hundred and fifty miles of sterile plain between Corpus Christi and the Rio Grande, to await some "open act of hostility" in a place where such an act was most likely to occur. On March 25th, it reached Point Isabel (Brazos St. Iago) where General Taylor established his depot and base of operations.[5] Leaving here a garrison of

[1] Document, Brooks's *Mexican War*, 66.—Text of Taylor's reply, Fry's *Taylor*, 84.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, i, 319.

[3] A few days later Polk had told Calhoun that, in his opinion, "the British Minister in Mexico had exerted his influence to prevent Mr. Slidell from being received."—*Ibid.*, i, 338.

[4] Fry's *Taylor*, 87, and Polk's Message of May 11, 1846.—Richardson, iv, 439.

[5] Taylor's dispatch of March 25, 1846.—Text, Fry's *Taylor*, 93.

four hundred and fifty men, he advanced to the Rio Grande, at a point opposite the Mexican town of Matamoros, where he placed thirty-five hundred troops in garrison at Fort Brown, and began to erect batteries to command Matamoros, despite the protests of the Mexican commanders.[1] These movements had, of course, been ordered before the news of Slidell's failure had reached Washington, and had been designed to aid the cause of peace. "It is a wise maxim of the Father of his Country," Polk said in explanation of his apparently hostile movements,[2] "that 'to be prepared for war is one of the most efficient means of preserving peace,' and . . . we should 'remember also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it.' . . . It is my settled purpose to pursue such a course of policy as may be best calculated to preserve, both with Great Britain and Mexico, an honorable peace, which nothing will so effectively promote as unanimity in our councils and a firm maintenance of all our just rights."

At Fort Brown, Taylor held his army quiet for almost a month. He constructed defensive works, drilled his men, answered indignant protests from Mexican commanders across the river, and waited. On April 24th, a notice came from General Arista,[3]

[1] *E. g.*, letter of Cardenas.—Text, Fry's *Taylor*, 93–94.

[2] Message of March 26, 1846.—Richardson, iv, 426–428.

[3] Commander-in-chief of the Northern Division of the Mexican Army, who had just succeeded Ampudia as commanding officer at Matamoros.

declaring hostilities opened'; but, as this could not be said to constitute an "open act of hostility," General Taylor still remained inactive. Then news arrived that the Mexicans, in considerable numbers, were crossing the river both above and below the fort; and a party of dragoons, consisting of sixty-four men under Captain Thornton, was dispatched to watch their movements.[2] How the encounter between these two forces came about, no one can say with assurance; but the Mexican general, Torrejon, completely overwhelmed our little detachment, killing eleven, wounding six, and capturing Captain Thornton with his remaining force. Here, then, was the "open act of hostility" for which Taylor had been ordered to wait. He instantly reported it to Washington, and sent requisitions to the Governors of Texas and Louisiana for four regiments of volunteers. He then turned to the task of preparing to capture Matamoros, and carry the war into the enemy's country.

Upon the day before the arrival of General Taylor's dispatch, Slidell had called at the White House to make a verbal report concerning the failure of his mission. A Cabinet meeting had been summoned for the next day (May 9, 1846); and all had agreed that, if the Mexican forces at Matamoros should commit any act of hostility on

[1] Mariano Arista to "the General-in-chief of the forces of the United States encamped opposite Matamoros," April 24, 1846.—Text, Brooks's *Mexican War*, 101.

[2] *General Scott and his Staff* (Anon.), pp. 171–173, for sketch of Captain Thornton and of this engagement.

General Taylor's forces, a message should at once be sent to Congress, recommending an immediate declaration of war. Polk had then asked the opinion of each member in turn, as to whether he ought to send a message to Congress on May 12th, and whether, in that message, he should recommend a declaration of war.[1] All, except George Bancroft, the Secretary of the Navy, had agreed that he should,[2] and it had been decided that the war message should be prepared at once, and submitted to the Cabinet on Tuesday. At two o'clock, the Cabinet had adjourned. At six the same afternoon, came the first news of the engagement on the Rio Grande, in the form of dispatches from General Taylor.[3] Before the President had finished reading them, William L. Marcy, Secretary of War, entered the room. An eager conference followed, resulting in a decision to summon the Cabinet at once. Within an hour, every member had appeared, and all agreed that the message urging Congress to declare war upon Mexico, which was to have been laid before the Cabinet on Tuesday, should be sent to Congress on Monday (May 11, 1846).[4] But, as war already existed, "by the act of Mexico," it was deemed wise to urge

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 384–385.

[2] Buchanan, the Secretary of State, had said that he would feel better satisfied to urge war, "if the Mexican forces had or should commit any hostility; but that, as matters stood, we had ample cause of war against Mexico, and he gave his assent to the measure."—Polk's *Diary*, i, 385.

[3] Brought by R. Jones, Adjutant-General.

[4] Polk's *Diary*, i, 387.

upon Congress "vigorous and prompt measures to enable the Executive to prosecute the war."[1]

On Sunday, the House Committee on Military Affairs met and agreed, unanimously, to propose a bill appropriating ten millions of dollars for military equipment, and authorizing the President to raise fifty thousand troops for prosecuting the war.[2]

At noon of Monday, May 11th, Polk sent to Congress his famous War Message,[3] a document of six printed pages, reviewing the history of the long conflict with Mexico which he now urged Congress to terminate by recognizing war. "Mexico," he said, "has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory, and shed American blood upon American soil. . . . War exists, and notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself."

The message dispatched, President Polk and his advisers waited impatiently for the reply of Congress. They were not kept long in suspense. About six o'clock of the same day, Mr. Slidell called at the White House, and informed the President that the House of Representatives, by a vote of 173 to 14, had passed a bill for carrying

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 386. Such a demand was difficult to resist. Many a Whig felt as did Abraham Lincoln who later declared, "Whenever there was an attempt to procure a vote of mine which would indorse the origin and justice of the war, I refused to give such indorsement, . . . but I never voted against the supplies for the army."—George Haven Putnam's *Lincoln-Douglas Debates*, 63.

[2] *Ibid.*, 388.

[3] Text, *Richardson*, iv, 437–443. The Slidell and Taylor dispatches were sent with the message.

into effect all the recommendations of his message.[1] In the Senate his demands were sustained by an even greater majority. Calhoun, it is true, spoke in opposition, but his arguments convinced no one, not even himself, as he finally declined to cast his vote against the Administration. After an excited debate of several hours, the House bill was passed,[2] by a vote of "42 ayes to 2 noes,"[3] the President signing it the same day.

This act, declared Calhoun, "has closed the first volume of our political history, . . . and opened the second. . . . No mortal can tell what will be written in that."[4] The Abolitionists, however, felt that they knew. To them, this appeared but a wicked attempt to win new slave territory,[5] and the enthusiasm with which Congress and the masses responded to the President's call, but another sign of the depravity of men, bred up under a compact which one of their leaders had denounced as a "covenant with death and an agreement with hell."[6] Had they seen as Calhoun

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 392.

[2] May 13, 1846.

[3] A few unimportant amendments were made in which the House promptly concurred.—Polk's *Diary*, i, 394.

Passage in House, *Globe*, 29th Cong., 1st Sess., 795. In Senate, *ibid.*, 804.

[4] Quoted in Von Holst's *Calhoun*, 280.

[5] In June, 1846, Polk received a letter from Ohio, warning him against attempting to draft men for a war which is widely regarded as "for the support of slavery."—Polk MSS., 1846. Library of Congress.

[6] On January 27, 1843, at a meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Faneuil Hall, Garrison secured the passage of a resolution declaring "That the compact which exists between the North and the South is 'a covenant with death and an agreement with hell.' " —*William Lloyd Garrison*, by his children, iii, 88.

saw, they would have hailed the advance of General Taylor, as of one who swings "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon," for to him it was given to see in this war, at its very inception, not new strength for the slave-holding States, but the cause of strife which was to reopen the dangerous questions that had slumbered since the days of the Missouri Compromise—the beginning of the end of Slavery.

CHAPTER VI

OPENING SCENES OF THE MEXICAN WAR

MAY–OCT., 1846.

NEWS from the front soon made it evident that President Polk had not gone beyond the facts in announcing to Congress that war already existed. Leaving his little fort on the Rio Grande in charge of a small garrison, Taylor had started eastward to visit and strengthen his depot at Point Isabel. As he departed, he could hear the batteries across the river open upon his fort; but he proceeded on his way with characteristic composure, judging that Fort Brown, though garrisoned by only five hundred men, with four eighteen-pounders and four six-pounders, was competent to sustain such attack as was likely to be made before he could secure Point Isabel and return. His calculations proved correct. On May 3d, Arista began an attack which, for six days, continued, with the paltry loss of one killed and nine wounded. From Point Isabel, this cannonading was distinctly audible, yet Taylor, quietly continued his arrangements, so garrisoning the Point that there should be little fear of its falling a

victim to any Mexican army. This done, he again turned his face toward Fort Brown, conscious that the intervening road was held by General Arista, with a force fully twice as large as his own.[1] At two in the afternoon of May 8, 1846, he reached a point almost midway between Point Isabel and Fort Brown, where General Arista had posted ten pieces of artillery, completely occupying the road. In his rear was a strong reserve, and upon either flank grew dense thickets. This was Palo Alto, and Taylor fully comprehended that here would be fought a battle, heads on. Moving steadily forward, he approached to within seven hundred yards of Arista's advance-guard before the Mexican batteries opened. Then, coolly unlimbering his great guns, less numerous but more powerful than those of the enemy,[2] he ordered that the fire be directed at the ranks of the opposing army. It was soon evident that the Americans had the advantage, as our guns were manned by gunners who aimed deliberately and fired with terrible accuracy; but the smoke of the burning prairie

[1] In his dispatch of May 9, 1846, Taylor estimates the Mexican army at six thousand. "Our strength," he adds, "did not exceed, all told, twenty-three hundred."—Text, Fry's *Taylor*, 127. His more careful report of May 16th gives approximately the same figures.—Text, *ibid.*, 128–131. General Arista's Report of May 8th declares that each army numbered about three thousand men. The Mexicans, he says, had only twelve pieces of artillery, the Americans twenty.—Text, Fry's *Taylor*, 132–134. See also, Taylor to R. C. Wood, May 9, 1846, Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 1 and 2.

[2] Taylor's Report of May 9, 1846, says that the Mexicans had seven pieces of artillery, the Americans four, but two of them were eighteen-pounders. His more careful Report of May 16th says that the Mexican artillery numbered ten pieces.

grass, added to that of the cannon and musketry, soon checked the battle, and nightfall left Taylor's army in full possession of the field.[1] Such was the battle of Palo Alto, an indecisive engagement fought almost wholly with artillery. The superiority of the American gunners is fully revealed by the fact that the enemy's loss, in killed and wounded, was over six hundred, while that of the American army was only fifty-five men.[2]

At dawn the next day, Taylor resumed his march, conscious that at least one more battle awaited him before he could reach Fort Brown and relieve his gallant little garrison. This battle was soon fought. General Arista had taken a strong position in the ravine of Resaca de la Palma (del Guerrero). His cannon were planted, his plans arranged with care; but the terror of the conquering race was upon his men. A fierce charge of the American cavalry, a succession of irresistible bayonet charges which Taylor now deemed necessary; then a camp deserted, and the Rio Grande filled with the corpses of those who had ventured their lives in one mad effort to stem its turbid current. This is the story of the battle of Resaca de la Palma (May 9, 1846), which made the Rio Grande the actual

[1] Taylor's Report of May 16, 1846.—Text, Fry's *Taylor*, 128–131.

[2] Taylor's Report of May 16th. This estimate of the Mexican loss, he says, "is very moderate, and formed upon the number actually counted upon the field and upon the reports of their own officers." General Arista's report, however, written on May 8th, declares his loss only "two hundred and fifty-two men, dispersed, wounded, and killed."—Text, Fry's *Taylor*, 132–134.

boundary line between Mexico and the United States.[1]

In the meanwhile, after much deliberation and with great reluctance, which had been fostered by mutual antipathies, Polk had tendered to General Winfield Scott the position of Commander-in-Chief of the armies against Mexico,[2] which appointment Scott had promptly accepted.[3] On the same day orders[4] were issued to Commodore Conner, to place the Mexican coast under blockade, but not to obstruct the return of Santa Anna, (again an exile)[5] should he attempt to reënter

[1] For further details, see Taylor's Official Report.—Text, Fry's *Taylor*, 142–148. Taylor estimated the enemy's loss in this battle at about four hundred. "Our loss was . . . thirty-six men killed and seventy-one wounded." See also Taylor to R. C. Wood, May 9, 1846.—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 1.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, i, 396. On the same day, May 13, 1846, Polk wrote in his Diary, "I did not consider him in all respects suited to such an important command, yet his . . . position entitled him to it if he desired it." Taylor's opinion of Scott, written only a week later is far more severe. "General Scott," he wrote, "has charged General Gaines with being crazy. He can with great propriety return the compliment." —Text, Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 20.

[3] Polk's *Dairy* abounds in remarks showing a distrust of Scott, and Scott's *Memoirs* show an equal distrust of the President. Polk's feeling was due in part, no doubt, to the knowledge that Scott was an aspirant for the Presidency; but it was also due to his belief, that "General Scott was not only hostile but recklessly vindictive in his feelings toward my Administration."—Polk's *Diary*, i, 414. See also *ibid.*, 401, 408, 413, 414, 417, 425. On pages 308–309 of this volume, Polk gives the story of Scott's endorsement of an anti-administration letter written by General Worth, an act which Polk terms "highly exceptional," and amounting to "insubordination."

[4] Polk's Second Annual Message, Dec. 8, 1846.—Richardson, iv, 492.

[5] "Santa Anna had been expelled from power by the army [and] was known to be in open hostility to Paredes, and publicly pledged against foreign intervention and the restoration of monarchy in Mexico."—*Ibid.*

Mexico. This rather extraordinary command was given, says Polk,[1] because, "the fruit of Santa Anna's return to Mexico might strongly tend to produce a disposition . . . to restore and preserve peace with the United States." For this belief the crafty exile was himself responsible. For some months he had been in secret correspondence with President Polk, fostering the idea that he was the friend of America and would, if restored to power, make the concessions which the American Government demanded. On February 13, 1846, a certain Colonel Atocha, a naturalized citizen of the United States, who had recently been expelled from Mexico on account of supposed political connections with Santa Anna,[2] had visited Polk, and had assured him that he had left Santa Anna in the city of Havana only a month before, and that his return to power was soon to be effected. "Santa Anna," he said,[3] is "in favour of a treaty with the United States," and, in adjusting the boundaries, is willing to concede that "the Del Norte should be the western Texas line, and the Colorado of the West down through the Bay of San Francisco to the sea should be the Mexican line on the North, and that Mexico should cede all East and North of these natural boundaries to the United States for a pecuniary consideration . . . [of] . . . thirty millions of dollars." In another conversation, three days later,[4] Atocha had sug-

[1] Richardson, iv, 492.
[2] Expelled Feb. 26, 1845.—Polk's *Diary*, i, 223.
[3] *Ibid.*, 224.
[4] Feb. 16, 1846.—*Ibid.*, 228.

gested that "the United States should take strong measures . . . that our armies should be marched at once from Corpus Christi to the Del Norte, and a strong naval force assembled at Vera Cruz, . . . to make it appear that the Government was compelled"[1] to yield to the demands of the United States. Paredes, Almonte, and General Santa Anna, he had boldly declared, were all willing for such an arrangement as the United States desired, but dared not make it until it was made apparent that it was necessary to save the country from a war with the United States. He had assured Polk that Santa Anna's last words to him at parting had been: "When you see the President, tell him to take strong measures and such a treaty [as he desires] can be made, and I will sustain it."[2]

Although inclined to distrust the glittering promises which Atocha thus held out to him,[3] Polk was undoubtedly influenced by them; and they probably went far toward deciding him to give the above-mentioned instructions to Commodore Conner.[4]

[1] I have slightly altered the order of the above quotation, in order to condense its meaning, while preserving the original language of Polk's Diary.

[2] *Ibid.*, 229.

[3] "Colonel Atocha," he wrote in his Diary, on the day of this last conversation, Feb. 16, 1846 (i, 230), "is a person to whom I would not give my confidence."

[4] Those instructions read thus:

"U. S. NAVY DEPARTMENT,
"May 13, 1846.

"COMMODORE. If Santa Anna endeavors to enter the Mexican ports, you will allow him to pass freely. Respectfully yours,

"GEORGE BANCROFT."

Toward the close of that same memorable thirteenth of May, the Secretary of State, James Buchanan, presented to the President the draft of dispatches which he proposed sending to London, Paris, and other foreign capitals, announcing the declaration of war against Mexico. These dispatches contained a pledge that "our object was not to dismember Mexico, or to make conquests, . . . that in going to war we did not do so with a view to acquire either California, or New Mexico, or any other portion of the Mexican territory."[1]

Polk promptly declined to sanction any such pledge, declaring frankly that, in making peace, he should, if practicable, "obtain California and such other portion of the Mexican territory as would be sufficient to indemnify our claimants on Mexico, and to defray the expenses of the war which that power, by her long continued wrongs and injuries, had forced us to wage." To Buchanan's reply, that this would mean war also with England and probably with France, Polk answered: "Before I would make the pledge, . . . I would meet the war which either England or France or all the powers of Christendom might wage, and . . . stand and fight until the last man among us fell. . . . Neither as a citizen, nor as President, would I permit or tolerate any intermeddling of any European Power on this continent," in which view, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Navy, the Attorney-General, and the Postmaster-General, warmly concurred.[2]

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 397.

[2] *Ibid.*, i, 398–400.

In his frequent conferences with Scott, made necessary by military preparations, Polk's distrust of his chief commander constantly increased. On May 19th, he wrote,[1] I understand "that General Scott has given out that he would not probably go to the seat of war . . . until about the first of September. I remarked that . . . General Scott must proceed very soon to his post, or that I would supersede him in command."[2] In explanation of his position, General Scott injudiciously informed the Secretary of War,[3] "I do not desire to place myself in the most perilous of all positions, a fire upon my rear from Washington and the fire in front from the Mexicans."[4] This letter was read

[1] *Diary*, i, 408.

[2] In his *Memoirs*, ii, 384, Scott gives this explanation of his unwillingness to go to the front at this time: "That it was harsh and unusual for a senior, without reinforcements, to supersede a meritorious junior," and, that he "doubted whether that was the right season, or the Rio Grande the right basis, for offensive operations."

The reason which reached General Taylor's ears was quite different. "There is a foolish story here," he wrote to Dr. Wood, "that General Scott and the President have had a serious misunderstanding, growing out of the General declining to come here, as it would interfere with his prospects and necessary steps to . . . being elected president in 1848. . . . They need have no apprehensions of being interfered with by me for that high office, which I would decline if proffered. . . ."—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 14.

[3] Scott to Marcy, May 21, 1846.—Text, Niles, lxx, 231. See also Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 385.

[4] When General Taylor saw this letter, he wrote to Dr. R. C. Wood that he regarded it as "a most unfortunate letter, which . . . will have the effect to prostrate him most effectually, and will . . . blight his prospects . . . for the presidency, which he has been looking forward to with a longing eye for many years . . . I deeply regret his course," he adds, "on several accounts, first it has had the effect to . . . keep me in my present command, which I by no means desire."—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 17.

aloud in the Cabinet meeting of May 22, 1846,[1] and seemed to justify Polk's contention that it would not be safe to entrust the actual command of operations against Mexico to Scott.[2] It was, accordingly, decided, by unanimous vote of the Cabinet, to "excuse General Scott from the command . . . and to order him to remain in the discharge of his duties at Washington."[3] This prompt action elicited from Scott a letter of explanation, "subdued in tone," laudatory of the President, and declaring that his remark about "a fire upon my rear from Washington" was meant to apply, not to the President, but to the Secretary of War, and members of Congress, who are "raising a clamor and creating a prejudice against" me,[4] which explanation, however, failed to alter the verdict.

During all this time, military preparations had been pushed steadily forward in Congress; and, by the end of June, 1846, the United States stood ready for the task of "conquering a peace." The plans contemplated campaigns by three armies. First, Zachary Taylor, now Brevet Major-General,[5]

[1] Polk's *Diary*, i, 415. [2] *Ibid.*, 420.

[3] Marcy's letter to Scott embodying this decision was read to the Cabinet on May 25, 1846.—*Ibid.*, 424. With the modification of one paragraph suggested by Buchanan, the letter was unanimously approved by the Cabinet.—*Ibid.* Text, Appendix to *Cong. Globe*, 651. General Scott's interpretation of this decision is given in his *Memoirs* (1864 edition), vol. ii, 384–385.

[4] Polk's *Diary*, May 26, 1846, i, 428.

[5] Taylor had been commissioned Colonel on April 4, 1832, and transferred to the Sixth Infantry on July 7, 1843. He had been made Brigadier-General by brevet on December 25, 1837, and Major-General by brevet on May 28, 1846. His regular commission of Major-General was issued on June 29, 1846. T. H. S. Hamersly's *Complete Army Register of the U. S.*, "Z. Taylor."

with his army, known as the "Army of Occupation," was to continue his advance to the Mexican capital. Secondly, Colonel Stephen W. Kearny,[1] with a new command to be known as the "Army of the West," rendezvoused at Fort Leavenworth,[2] on the Missouri River, was to march against New Mexico. Thence he was to move westward, to coöperate with the fleet which had long hovered about the Golden Gate; while Brigadier-General John E. Wool[3] was to take the "Army of the Center" and occupy Coahuila and Chihuahua.

Mexico, also, was exerting every effort to put herself into a condition of military defense; and, when Santa Anna, by the connivance of the American Government, effected his return from exile,[4] he found the war spirit high. On July 6, 1846, the Mexican Congress had authorized the Government "to use the natural defenses of the country to repel aggression, . . . and to make known to friendly nations the justifiable causes which obliged the nation to defend its rights by

[1] Kearny had been commissioned Colonel of the First Dragoons on July 4, 1836. He was made Brigadier-General, on June 30, 1846, and Brevet Major-General on December 6, 1846, for gallant and meritorious conduct in New Mexico and California.—Hamersly's *Army Register*, "Kearny."

[2] For Cabinet discussion over Polk's plans for General Kearny's expedition, see Polk's *Diary*, i, 439–444.

[3] Wool had been commissioned Brigadier-General on June 25, 1841. He was made Major-General by brevet on February 23, 1847, for gallant and meritorious conduct in the battle of Buena Vista.—Hamersly's *Army Register*, "Wool."

[4] Aug. 16, 1846.—Young's *History of Mexico*, 385. A meeting under General Mariano Salas had deposed President Paredes, and the recalled Santa Anna again found himself at the head of the State and the Mexican Army.—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 55, note.

repelling force by force."[1] Quickly adjusting himself to the spirit of the nation, Santa Anna disregarded the pledges by which he had induced Polk to facilitate his return, and, having secured the position of President of Mexico, and, Commander-in-Chief of her armies, began the work of organizing his resources for a vigorous war.

News of the engagements of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma had reached Washington on May 23, 1846, and Taylor's official report arrived two days later.[2] Polk had promptly showed his appreciation of these victories by sending a special message to the Senate "nominating General Z. Taylor of the army a Major-General, by brevet, for his gallant victories over the Mexican forces on the Del Norte on the 8th and 9th days of this month."[3] General Scott had followed suit, by endorsing a resolution of Congress voting a gold medal to the new Major-General,[4] while Clay and Webster went farther, cautiously suggesting that, in this hero might be found a good standard bearer for the Whigs in the next Presidential campaign.[5]

Had General Taylor followed up his victories by

[1] Quoted in Bartlett's *United States*, iii, 665.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, i, 422–425.

[3] *Ibid.*, 428, May 26, 1846. This message does not appear in Richardson.

[4] Text, Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 386 *et seq.* That this did not represent his real opinion of Taylor is evident from the four preceding pages of those same memoirs, where he says of Taylor: "He was quite ignorant, for his rank, and quite bigoted in his ignorance. . . . Few men have ever had a more comfortable, labor-saving contempt for learning of every kind." He does grant him, however, "pure, uncorrupted morals, combined with indomitable courage."

[5] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 389–390.

crossing the Rio Grande at once, he might have completed the destruction of Mexico's "Army of the North:" but, ignorant of the full extent of his achievements, he allowed nine days to pass before effecting a crossing.[1] Then he found Matamoros abandoned and Arista's army already at a safe distance.[2] He, therefore, took up his quarters in the captured city, where he soon found himself seriously embarrassed by the too eager energy of his friends. Volunteers came pouring into his camp in a flood. "What is to be done with them, . . . I am unable to say," he wrote to Dr. Wood.[3] "I fear they are a lawless set."[4] They were indeed hardy, courageous, fellows, with tremendous energy for war and enthusiasm for the hero of Palo Alto, but with no military discipline or equipment, and a dangerously keen appetite for plunder.[5] To sustain and care for the troops already on hand, with the inadequate commissariat at his disposal, had been a serious problem; but to feed, clothe, and arm this new army appeared well-nigh a hopeless task. With a vast territory to be included within his scheme of supplies, with little money available, and few steamers, transports, or even ordinary wagons,[6] General Taylor was facing

[1] Taylor's Dispatch of May 18, 1846.—Text, Fry's *Taylor*, 170–172.

[2] Taylor to Wood, May 19, 1846.—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 4.

[3] June 20, 1846.—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 20.

[4] *Ibid.*, 22.

[5] For Taylor's own account of his life at Matamoros, see eleven letters written, during the period, to Dr. R. C. Wood of the U. S. Army.—*Ibid*, 3–37.

[6] On June 21, 1846, Taylor wrote Dr. Wood: "There are now 10,000 men here, and in its vicinity, waiting and a portion of them a month, for

a problem which seemed almost insoluble. To move forward and win the victories which he was planning, he felt to be an easy task as compared with the gigantic burden of meeting these details of subsistence.[1] It was, therefore, the fourth of August, before he felt that a forward movement was feasible, and even then matters were far from the perfection which a careful general must desire. He, however, moved slowly northward, up the Rio Grande, occupying in turn Reinosa, Comargo, Meier, and other stations as he advanced. At Comargo, the head of navigation, he established a depot of supplies, its close proximity to the Rio Grande making it possible to use that river for purposes of transportation. Reinforcements continued to arrive, militia generals being especially noticeable, much to Taylor's dissatisfaction, for what he wanted was provisions. "We have had a large accession of militia genl^{s}, recently, in addition to Pillow and Quitman," he wrote on August 23.[2] "Maj^{r}-Genl Butler and Brs.-Hamer and Shields have just arrived . . . and B^{r} Genl Marshall is expected by the first boat from below; so there will be no lack of Genl^{s}. I could have

a few small steam boats, and wagons to carry their provisions, &c. toward the enemy. . . . time enough to have sent to Liverpool for them. . . . Was I a prominent or ambitious aspirant for civil distinction or honors, I might readily suppose there was an intention . . . to break me down. . . ."—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 13.

[1] Writing to Dr. Wood on July 14, 1846, Taylor says, regarding the abuses in the Quartermaster's Department: "I know of but one way to correct the same, which is to remove Q^{r} Masters not from one station to another, but to civil life."—*Ibid.*, 26.

[2] Taylor to Dr. Wood, Comargo, Aug. 23, 1846.—*Ibid.*, 45.

myself wished they had not been quite so numerous."

After a delay of over a month, Taylor started westward with his army,[1] six thousand all told, half regulars and half volunteers, having become convinced, as he sarcastically wrote, that another twelve months would have been required for the Quartermaster's Department to make the necessary arrangements. As medicines and certain other supplies are particularly needed, he added, the Quartermaster "shipped them on the slowest boat on the river."[2] Monterey, a city of ten thousand inhabitants and the commercial center of the district, was the immediate object of his advance, as he was convinced that, once possessed of that city, with Comargo and the Rio de San Juan which connected them, further operations in the interior would be greatly facilitated, and the way to Saltillo and San Luis Potosi opened.

It is probable that no American general ever advanced to glorious victories with more reluctance than that displayed here by General Taylor. He presents the strange picture of a warrior with a peace policy lodged at his heart.[3] Although pro-

[1] See Taylor to Dr. Wood, Comargo, Sept. 3, 1846.—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 50. Also Polk's *Diary*, ii, 170. For table giving details of the composition of the army, see Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 57, note. The total there given is 6670.

[2] Taylor to Dr. Wood, Comargo, Sept. 3, 1846.—*Ibid.*, 51.

[3] "No one can desire peace more than I do," he wrote to Dr. Wood, on Aug. 23, 1846, "and notwithstanding the honors which have been conferred on me, . . . I would willingly forego them all, could peace be restored to our country."—*Ibid.*, 47.

foundly distrustful of the President and his advisers, he lamented the fact that Congress had refused to respond to Polk's message of August 8th,[1] and appropriate two millions of dollars to be spent in securing peace. This request, he wrote, "induces me to believe . . . that the Executive has some plan or expectation of closing the war by negotiation.[2] I therefore regret the money was not placed at his disposal."[3]

As was his custom, General Taylor advanced with extreme deliberation, making sure of every step. By September 14th, he began to see signs of the enemy's outposts; but, at his advance, they withdrew to the shelter of Monterey, leaving his

[1] In two messages (Aug. 4, and Aug. 8, 1846. Richardson, iv, 456–457 and 459–460), President Polk had suggested that he might find it possible to make peace with Mexico, and perhaps gain territory by purchase, if two million dollars were placed in his hands by Congress, to be employed for these purposes. A bill making the appropriation desired had been promptly introduced into the House, where David Wilmot of Pennsylvania had succeeded in attaching to it the now famous "Wilmot Proviso," declaring, "That, as an express and fundamental condition to the acquisition of any territory from the Republic of Mexico by the United States, by virtue of any treaty which may be negotiated between them, and to the use by the Executive of the moneys herein appropriated, neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of the said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted." Thus amended, the appropriation bill had gone to the Senate (Aug. 10, 1846), where it died with the session, then almost ended. The principle stated in this "Proviso," however, continued to live, and became a dominating political issue throughout the entire period of the Mexican War and national expansion.

[2] Packenham, the British Minister at Washington, evidently entertained the same belief, for, on Sept. 10, 1846, he offered the mediation of England, but Polk after consulting his Cabinet, "respectfully declined the good offices."—Polk's *Diary*, ii, 129–132.

[3] Taylor to Dr. Wood, Comargo, Sept. 3, 1846.—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 51 and 52.

path undisputed.[1] On September 15th, the Texas Rangers under Captain McCulloch approached the important town of Marin,[2] a few miles northeast of Monterey, and occupied it without the slightest resistance, while, upon the plain outside the town, General Taylor concentrated his force. Scouts reported that General Ampudia, who commanded Monterey, was strongly intrenched, his force consisting of some nine thousand men, of whom three thousand were regulars,[3] and forty pieces of cannon, all securely ensconced in a city whose every approach had been most carefully fortified. Three days of reconnoitering only served to confirm these facts; but, on September 18th, Taylor again moved forward and bivouacked at San Francisco, twelve miles from Monterey.[4] At dawn of the nineteenth,[5] he again advanced; and a few hours' march brought him to a long hill, from the top of which he caught his first clear glimpse of Monterey, lying almost in the mouth of a great gap in the towering walls of the Sierra Madre rising south and west. Through that gap lay the only practicable road to Saltillo and San Luis Potosi. Beyond it rose the heights

[1] Taylor to Dr. Wood, Sept. 16, 1846.—Bixby's *Letters to Zachary Taylor*, 57.

[2] See Samuel C. Reid's *McCulloch's Texas Rangers*, 133 *et seq.*, for details.

[3] Taylor to War Department, Sept. 17, 1846, quoted in Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 59.

[4] *Our Army at Monterey*, by T. B. Thorpe, 44.

[5] Taylor to Dr. Wood, Monterey, Sept. 28, 1846.—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 59. For descriptions of Monterey and surroundings, see Frost's *Pictorial History of Mexico and the War*, 279–283; Brooks's *Mexican War*, 174; Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 58; Thorpe's *Our Army at Monterey*, 43 *et seq.*

of Buena Vista, of whose part in his life's history Taylor was as yet ignorant. At nine o'clock, as he stood gazing at Monterey, a white puff of smoke rose from one of the fortified heights above the city, followed by a report, which reverberated with startling distinctness along the crests of the mountains. "It was," writes Luther Giddings,[1] "the first hostile gun many of us had ever heard and for the moment arrested every word and thought." By this signal, General Ampudia announced his belief that his position was impregnable, and, as this fact became evident, the troops grew eager for the assault.

Taylor, however, was deeply conscious of the difficulty of the task before him. His belief, expressed a few days before in a dispatch to the War Department, that, "It is . . . doubtful whether Ampudia will attempt to hold Monterey,[2]" had vanished like the mists which a few hours before had concealed the tall mountain peaks about him. His eyes were fully open to the danger of his situation. Victory here would be on no such easy terms as at Resaca de la Palma. Pressing forward to reconnoiter, he arrived, without opposition, within one thousand five hundred yards of Ciudadela, or Black Fort. Then the heavy guns of the fortifications opened upon him,[3] and, after a hasty examination of the city, and outstanding fortifications, he

[1] *Sketches of the Campaign in Northern Mexico*, 139.

[2] Taylor to the Secty. of War, Sept. 17. 29th Cong., 2nd Sess., Doc. 119, p. 139.

[3] T. R. Thorpe's *Our Army at Monterey*, 46.

moved back three miles to the beautiful grove of San Domingo, where wood and water were abundant, and from which the necessary inspection of the strong citadel could be made at leisure. Engineers were then detailed to examine the defenses of the city, in order that the attack might take advantage of any possible defects in the fortifications.[1] The reports which they brought in were discouraging enough. The place was even stronger than rumor had made it. Beyond the city, at the base of the foothills of the Sierras, ran the little river San Juan, its course almost east and west, but, on the east, making a sharp turn to the northward, almost covering that flank and affording a sort of natural moat for the city. Following the bed of the San Juan to the westward lay the road to Saltillo, stretching through the great gap, and losing itself among the flanking hills beyond.[2] To the right of this road stood the Loma de Independencia, or Hill of Independence, crowned by the old Bishop's Palace, now strongly fortified and defended by a garrison of artillery. To the west rose a second and still higher crest of the same mountain, surmounted by a fortification built of sandbags, and apparently impregnable, its western side being almost perpendicular and covered with great ledges of rock, often four or five feet in height, its fissures covered with a scrubby growth of prickly thorn bushes.[3] On the opposite side of the Saltillo road,

[1] Luther Giddings's *Sketches of the Campaign in Northern Mexico*, 142.

[2] Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 58. This author was in charge of the engineers detailed for the reconnaissance.

[3] Frost's *Pictorial History of Mexico and the War*, 295.

across the river, towered the Loma de Federacion, or Hill of Federation, its eastern peak crowned by stone fortifications called La Soldada, and its loftier crest to the westward by Fort Federacion, also fortified.[1] To the south and east, the defenses were reported equally strong, while to the north, in front of the American camp, lay the citadel defended by a ditch and infantry breastworks, showing embrasures for thirty-two cannon, and commanding the whole broad plain by which the city is approached from the north. Upon all sides, therefore, the defenses were formidable; but Taylor, after considering the reports of his engineers, decided that the western side was the safest point of approach, and this opinion was confirmed by a council of his principal officers.

As provisions were becoming scarce and it was reported that Santa Anna was advancing from San Luis with supplies and reinforcements for Monterey, General Taylor detached Brigadier-General Worth, with the Second Division of the army, to pass through the narrow valley west of Loma de Independencia, and gain the Saltillo road,[2] thus at one stroke cutting off the only retreat for artillery, and blocking the advance of Santa Anna's reinforcements. Before sundown the maneuver was accomplished, and Worth bivouacked for the night just beyond range of the guns of the Bishop's

[1] Kendall's *Mexican War*, 6.

[2] Sept. 20, 1846. Detailed account of troops engaged, plans, and leading features of this maneuver in Worth's Report of Sept. 28, 1846. —Text, T. B. Thorpe's, *Our Army at Monterey*, 172–179.

Palace,[1] where, gazing across at the heights of the Loma de Federacion, he determined that, on the morrow, he would carry them by storm. Dispatching a messenger to General Taylor, he announced this intention, requesting that a diversion might be made at that time against the center and left of the town,[2] in order to draw attention from his projected advance against the heights in the rear.

Having independently formed plans precisely similar to those suggested in this dispatch, which reached him at dawn of the twenty-first of September, General Taylor at once complied, and as he issued his orders the rattle of muskets told him that General Worth had begun his advance. The boom of the great guns from the western forts confirmed the tidings, and then the sharp crack of the Texas rifles, mixed with the heavier tones of the regulars' muskets, denoted a general engagement near the Saltillo road.

As General Worth had begun his advance, he had found his way disputed by a large body of Mexicans, both cavalry and infantry, and, instantly attacking, had forced them back under the shelter of the Bishop's Palace. The field thus cleared, he took possession of the Saltillo road, and sent a detachment, under Captain C. F. Smith, to storm the twin heights of Federation Hill.[3] It was gallantly done. Advancing to the river, un-

[1] Taylor's Report of Oct. 9, 1846.—Text, *ibid.*, 156.

[2] Taylor to Dr. Wood, Sept. 28, 1846.—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 59.

[3] Worth's Report of Sept. 28, 1846.

mindful of the shower of grape and canister, poured upon them from the surrounding batteries, they crossed, and began the ascent. For awhile the firing ceased, as the guns could not be depressed so as to reach them, and the distance was as yet too great for the rifles in Fort Federacion to do effective work. But, as General Worth watched their advance, he saw that the Mexicans on the summit had brought up their infantry from the rear, and were preparing to defend their position. A new detachment, under Captain Miles, was accordingly dispatched to the aid of the storming party, and, a few moments later, to render success certain, a third detachment, under Brigadier-General P. F. Smith, was ordered to advance.[1] As this last detachment ascended the slope, they saw their comrades above them mounting the breastworks of Fort Federacion, and heard their shouts of victory. The Mexican garrison had abandoned its position, and was in full flight toward La Soldada. Instantly mending his course, General Smith advanced against this stronghold, and in a few moments his men were climbing its walls, and the Mexican garrison emerged in full flight down the steep slope toward the shelter of the Bishop's Palace, whose guns opened with round shot and shell to protect their flight.

At this point, a violent storm stopped further progress, and the heights of Independence Hill, whose possession now became a military necessity, were reserved for the gallantry of another day.

[1] Worth's Report of Sept. 28, 1846.

"The troops," says General Worth's report,[1] "had now been thirty-six hours without food, and constantly tasked to the utmost physical exertions. Such as could be permitted, slept with arms in hand, subjected to a pelting storm, and without covering, till 3 o'clock A.M., when they were aroused to carry the hill Independencia."

In the meantime, the intended diversion, which Taylor had planned, in the interest of General Worth's attack, had itself assumed extensive proportions, and terrible slaughter had taken place on the eastern side of the city,[2] under the eye of the commanding general himself. A way had been opened into the very fortifications, and Captain Mansfield of the Engineers, who led the advance, had at first thought it possible to hold this position, but had abandoned the idea, upon discovering that each house was itself a fortification, manned by desperate Mexicans, and that each street was raked by artillery.[3] Only Fort Teneria, therefore, had been held, and the price which had been paid for it was terrible. "The dead," says an eyewitness of the scene,[4] "lay in almost every possible position; some of the wounded were screaming in agony as

[1] Worth's Report of Sept. 28, 1846.

[2] For graphic description of this action by one of the participants, see Luther Giddings's *Sketches of the Campaign in Northern Mexico*, 159–190.

[3] Taylor himself describes the attack on the eastern side, in a letter to Dr. Wood, dated Monterey, Sept. 28, 1846.—Text, Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 60. See also Lieutenant-Colonel Garland's report in T. B. Thorpe's, *Our Army at Monterey*, 187–189; General W. O. Butler's report, *ibid.*, 164–167; General Twiggs's report, *ibid.*, 180–183.

[4] Document quoted in Frost's *Pictorial History of the Mexican War*, 307–308.

they were hauled off in wagons; others lay on the ground begging for water and assistance; some hobbled along assisted by comrades; and a few, as we passed, turned a mute but imploring glance as if they desired help, and knew it would not be given."

The night which followed the engagement was even more horrible than the day had been. "Many a heroic soldier, who had that day been cool and collected, amid the uproar of battle, then felt, as his ear was pierced with the groans of his comrades, that the scenes of the battle-field are not the whole of war."[1]

But this slaughter had not been wholly in vain. "The main object proposed in the morning," runs General Taylor's report, "had been effected. A powerful diversion had been made in favor of the operations of the Second Division; one of the enemy's advanced works had been carried, and we now had a strong foothold in the town."[2]

That night, while his exhausted soldiers were taking their well-earned rest, General Worth was planning a daring movement for the capture of the height above the Bishop's Palace. The strength of that position was so great, and all of its approaches were so carefully guarded, that the only hope of success appeared to lie in a secret and

[1] See also Luther Giddings's description of the night of Sept. 21, 1846, in his *Sketches of the Campaign in Northern Mexico*, 187 *et seq.*

[2] Taylor's Report of Oct. 9, 1846. Full text of this report in *Taylor and his Generals; a Biography of Major-General Zachary Taylor* (Anon.), 89–106. T. B. Thorpe's, *Our Army at Monterey*, Appendix, gives full texts of the reports of the various commanders, and the names of the killed, wounded, and missing, etc.

rapid move during the quiet hours just preceding the dawn. Lieutenant-Colonel Childs, with six companies and two hundred carefully selected Texas Rangers, was chosen for this dangerous honor.[1] At three o'clock on the morning of September 22d, their movements effectually veiled by a dense fog, and the sound of their advance deadened by the constant patter of a cold rain, the little column moved forward, guided by two men who knew the exact location and character of the narrow path which they were to follow up the steep declivity.[2] Orders had been issued that the strictest silence should be observed; and, without a whisper, the men began the difficult ascent, no man seeing his fellows, so dense was the blackness of the night. Over half the ascent had been accomplished, when the ears of the watchful sentinels at the summit caught the sound of tin canteens rattling against the harness of laboring regulars. Instantly the alarm was given, followed by the flash of musketry, which warned General Worth that his secret had been discovered. At first no answering shot, however, came from the dark slope, where regulars and rangers, crouching low among the rocks and brushwood, toiled steadily upward. Then the anxious watchers on the Saltillo road heard the crack of the Texas rifles, and knew that the height had been gained. Reinforcements were instantly dispatched, dragging,

[1] Worth's Report of Sept. 28, 1846.

[2] Captain Sanders, a military, and Lieutenant Meade, a topographical, engineer.—*Ibid.*

or rather lifting, behind them a twelve-pound howitzer.[1] They reached the summit to find the works in the possession of Colonel Childs. The Mexicans had held their position until the storming party had mounted the breastworks with fixed bayonets when, panic-stricken, they had fled precipitately to the shelter of the Bishop's Palace. Some hours later, General Taylor who, during the day, had refrained from active operations upon the east,[2] saw the long lines of General Worth's Division issue, in perfect order, from the captured fortress, and descend the slope of about four hundred yards leading to the Bishop's Palace. Then the smoke of conflict hid them from his view; and then, high above the towers of this last strong fortress on the west, he saw the Stars and Stripes. The Bishop's Palace, "the key to Monterey,"[3] had fallen. The fate of Monterey was sealed.

At daybreak on the following morning,[4] as Taylor was preparing to renew his attack upon the eastern side of the city, an express from General Quitman announced the news that the enemy had "evacuated nearly all his defenses, in the lower part of the city,[5]" and had concentrated his forces about the Citadel and the Grand Plaza. The question now arose how these two points could be most safely reached, for General Taylor's experiences of the 21st had convinced him that an ad-

[1] Lieutenant Roland, of Duncan's battery, managed this difficult task, "having ascended an acclivity, as rugged as steep, between seven and eight hundred feet, in two hours."—Worth's Report of Sept. 28, 1846.

[2] Taylor's Report of Oct. 9, 1846. [3] Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 62. Sept. 23, 1846. [5] Taylor's Report of Oct. 9, 1846.

vance through the town was a wanton waste of life, the sharp-shooters upon the house-tops still commanding every street, with their deadly aim. The question was speedily solved, however, by the Texas Rangers who, recalling how San Antonio de Bexar had been taken from General Cos in 1836, suggested the expedient of breaking through the walls of one house after another, thus forming for themselves a protected causeway.[1]

In the meantime General Worth, in his position at the Bishop's Palace, had heard the firing to the east, and had at once started the attack from his side of the town, convinced that orders to that effect must, in some way, have miscarried.[2] His specific commands were that his men should seek shelter in the houses and, "by means of picks and bars break through the longitudinal section of the walls, work from house to house, and, ascending the roofs, place themselves on the same breast-height with the enemy."[3] Before night, therefore, they also had worked their way to the immediate vicinity of the Grand Plaza, leaving a covered way in their rear. Their position being then made known to General Taylor, it seemed best to him that no farther advance be attempted, "without a complete concert as to the lines and modes of approach."[4] Accordingly, an interview was arranged to take place at General Worth's head-

[1] General J. P. Henderson's Report of Oct. 1, 1846.—Kendall's *The War between the United States and Mexico*, 9, note.

[2] Worth's Report of Sept. 28, 1846.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Taylor's Report of Oct. 9, 1846.

quarters on the following morning; but it was never held, for, at an early hour, General Taylor received from General Ampudia a communication proposing to evacuate the town.[1] A conference was arranged; terms of capitulation were agreed upon[2]; and, at 10 o'clock on September 25th, in the presence of General Taylor and his staff, and at the signal of a cannon-shot, the Aztec eagle fluttered down from the flagstaff over Monterey, and the Stars and Stripes were raised in its place.

To many the terms granted by General Taylor, at the close of this engagement, have appeared too generous. The city, with practically all the munitions of war, was to be delivered up; the Mexican flag, when struck at the Citadel, was to be "saluted by its own battery"; and the Mexican army was to march out, the men carrying their arms.[3] An armistice of eight weeks was to be granted them, subject to orders or instructions of the respective governments. These terms, however, do not appear so remarkable when we recall the fact that news of Santa Anna's recall had just reached General Taylor, with the additional misinformation that he had agreed to receive peace

[1] Pedro de Ampudia to Señor Don Z. Taylor, Sept. 23, 1846.—Text, Thorpe's, *Our Army at Monterey*, 152–153. See also, Taylor to Dr. Wood, Sept. 28, 1846.—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 61.

[2] General Worth, General Henderson, and Colonel Davis acted for General Taylor, and General Raquena, General Ortega, and Señor Manuel Llano for General Ampudia. The text of the agreement, signed Sept. 24, 1846, is printed in Thorpe's, *Our Army at Monterey*, 96–97.

[3] As specified in Article 2.

commissioners from the United States.[1] In addition to this fact, Taylor realized that the storming of the Citadel would cost many lives, and also that his supplies were almost gone, and that he was one hundred and eighty miles from his depot.[2] His judgment was sustained by that of Colonel Jefferson Davis,[3] General Worth, General J. Pinckney Henderson, and other competent military men. It was also generally approved throughout the United States, both by civilians and experts; but the Administration at Washington viewed the matter in a different light, and, on October 13th, ordered Taylor to give notice that the armistice would cease at once, and to prepare for reopening hostilities. In communicating this decision to Santa Anna, Taylor ventured to suggest the idea of concluding an honorable peace, to which the Mexican President-General replied: "You should banish every idea of peace while a single North American in arms treads upon the territory of this Republic."

[1] In writing to Dr. Wood, a few days after the surrender, Taylor says: "These terms were liberal, but not considered too much so by all reflecting men belonging to the army here, especially considering our situation; besides . . . the President of the United States had offered to settle all differences between the two countries by negotiation, and the Mexican commander stating that said propositions he had no doubt would be favorably met by his Government as there was a general wish for peace on the part of the nation."—Taylor to Dr. Wood, Sept. 28, 1846. Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 61.

[2] Taylor himself gave his full explanation of the terms granted, in a letter to the Secretary of War, the text of which is preserved in Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 65–68

[3] Thorpe's, *Our Army at Monterey*, 89–95, gives a memorandum prepared by Colonel Jefferson Davis which presents the details of the negotiations.

CHAPTER VII

THE CONQUEST OF NEW MEXICO AND CALIFORNIA

1843–1847.

WHILE General Taylor was engaged in the task of penetrating to the heart of Mexico with his "Army of Occupation," the second great movement planned by the War Department was carried to a successful conclusion. One of the primary objects of the Slidell mission had been "to purchase, for a pecuniary consideration, California and New Mexico";[1] and the failure of that mission had only served to deepen Polk's conviction that these countries must be secured at any cost. In the activities of the British agents who, as he believed, had been instrumental in securing the rejection of Slidell by Mexico, Polk had seen a menace to the Monroe Doctrine,[2] as also in the activities of France, whom he regarded

[1] Polk's *Diary*, Sept. 16, 1845, i, 34 and 307. The idea of securing California had been fostered, if not created, by the careful reports of Larkin, the United States Consul in California, which "magnified the potential greatness of California in agriculture, mineral wealth, and commerce."—Kelsey in *Publications of the Academy of Pacific Coast History*, i, No. 5, p. 48.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, i, 338.

as ambitious for a foothold in California. Writing in 1844, Robert Greenhow declared, "To either of these nations the Sandwich Islands would prove a most valuable acquisition, as it would afford the means . . . of exercising a powerful influence over the destinies of the northwest coasts of America and California."[1] In 1843, indeed, the British Captain, Lord George Paulet, had actually seized these islands, and, although his occupation had been only temporary, it had tended to heighten Polk's distrust of England's intentions on the Pacific.[2] A similar effect had been produced by the letters of Larkin, United States Consul in California, who, in July, 1845, had written[3] that the presence, in California, of English and French consuls, with large salaries, and little apparent business, seemed to him a suspicious circumstance, the meaning of which "Uncle Sam will know to his cost." Jackson had given warning of the same kind, just before Polk's inauguration[4]; and there is small room for doubt that, but for the ceaseless activities of Polk and his advisers, England might have succeeded in her object, thus sounding the death-knell of the Monroe Doctrine, almost at the beginning of its history. The President, therefore, was not un-

[1] *Oregon and California*, 374. [2] *Ibid.*, 373.

[3] Niles, lxix, 203–204.

[4] *E. g.*, Jackson to William B. Lewis, Jan. 15, 1845, Ford MSS., Lenox Library, where he says: "There are a great British party arising in Texas—great offers being made by Great Britain—and, to the Quixotic mind, aroused by the conquest of all the country claimed by the Montezuma conquered, and added to the great republic of Texas, with the Californias added. What a splendid castle in the air; but it is taking deep root, and Elliot, the British Minister, is fomenting it."

reasonable in his suspicion that the Monroe Doctrine was in danger and that, to prevent its violation, we must seize the threatened region. As early as October 24, 1845, he had remarked to Colonel Benton that he was "strongly inclined to reaffirm Mr. Monroe's Doctrine against permitting foreign colonization . . . so far as this continent was concerned";[1] and, in this statement, as he carefully explains, "I had California and the fine bay of San Francisco as much in view as Oregon." It was, therefore, in the light of these fears that the conquest of California and New Mexico was planned.

Upon the day that war was declared, orders had been issued to Colonel Stephen W. Kearny,[2] of the first regiment of United States Dragoons, to see to the protection of a caravan of traders, who were reported to have started from Missouri for Santa Fé.[3] The Santa Fé region was within the area claimed by Texas, and was, furthermore, the center of an extensive trade between St. Louis and the Mexican city of Chihuahua, the annual value of which was estimated at from one to two millions of dollars.[4] Its Governor, Manuel Armijo, had for some time been subjecting the American traders in that region to serious extortions, collecting a duty of five hundred dollars on each wagon load of goods.[5]

[1] Polk's *Diary*, vol. i, 70.

[2] Colonel Kearny's name is often mistakenly given as Kearney in histories of the Mexican War.

[3] Polk's *Diary*, May 13, 1846, i, 396.

[4] Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 77.

[5] Frank S. Edwards's *Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*, 19.

The mere protection of traders, however, was not a sufficient object to justify the employment of a considerable military force in time of actual war; and Kearny's instructions were, accordingly, extended to the creation of an army to be known as the "Army of the West," whose duty it should be to capture Santa Fé, and make of it a center for military operations against the northern dependencies of Mexico. He was authorized to raise a volunteer army, not to exceed three thousand men, to which he was to add the regulars, then posted at Fort Leavenworth on the Missouri River; and, to his call, volunteers responded in such numbers that it became necessary to select only such as seemed best suited to the enterprise.[1] So rapid, indeed, was the process of enrollment and equipment that, although the first orders for the expedition had not been received until May, 1846, the "Army of the West," twenty-seven hundred strong[2] and thoroughly equipped, was in motion by the end of June.

Shortly before his departure from Fort Leavenworth, Colonel Kearny received additional orders from the War Department,[3] declaring that, after securing Santa Fé and the province of New Mexico, he should proceed to California, there to coöperate with the United States fleet in capturing and occupying that region. He was informed that, in view

[1] Edwards's *Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*, 20.

[2] Table showing Kearny's force at the start, Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 78.

[3] Dated June 3, 1846.—Text, Connelley's *Doniphan Expedition*, Appx.

of these enlarged plans, an addition of one thousand mounted volunteers had been called for, who would follow him to Santa Fé; and his attention was directed to the fact that a party of Mormon emigrants was on its way to California, and might be easily induced to cast in its lot with him, giving military services in return for the protection of his army, and in consideration of receiving the regular pay of volunteers. He was, furthermore, given the gratifying assurance that he would receive the rank of Brigadier-General, as soon as he should begin his movement toward California.[1]

From the Missouri River to Bent's Fort on the Arkansas, the road lay across vast plains, entirely barren in some places, and in others covered with rank vegetation, from which arose clouds of gnats which, "without biting, . . . got into the nostrils, eyes and ears, creating a singularly pricking sensation, and making our horses, almost frantic with pain."[2] Day after day, the little army faced the monotony of the weary march, unbroken by incident, with the exception of the hunting necessary to furnish fresh meat. In those days, the plains were dotted with numberless bison, easily approached by an experienced hunter, and which furnished a diversion, almost as necessary as the food itself. On the 15th of July, Frank Edwards, one of the chroniclers of this march, records

[1] This commission was issued on June 30, 1846.—Hamersly's *Army Register*, "Kearny."

[2] Frank S. Edwards's *Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*, 28.

the sight of a herd. "There must have been three or four thousand and, from the distance, they resembled a shadow cast upon the earth from a black cloud as it passes across the sun."[1] To add to the difficulties of the march, those camp-followers of the West, the great gray wolves of the prairie, were always at hand to avenge the death of the bison. "It was almost impossible to get any sleep during the night after we had killed any cattle," adds Edwards,[2] "as these animals would assemble around our camp and, sitting upon their haunches, howl in the most mournful manner all night long."[3]

Marveling at the new and astonishing life of the prairie, the little army advanced, and, after a month of steady marching, encamped at Bent's Fort, the appointed general rendezvous. As the journey from this point was to lie through the enemy's country, and as the long march of over five hundred miles[4] had greatly fatigued his army, Kearny held camp here for three days,[5] spending the time in collecting information concerning the

[1] Frank S. Edwards's *Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*, 28.

[2] *Ibid.*, 32.

[3] General A. A. Woodhull has kindly called my attention to the fact that Edwards is evidently mistaken in this statement. "The great gray wolf," he says, "is not likely to make a noise about a camp. The animal which Edwards evidently had in mind is the smaller, and less dangerous, wolf commonly called coyote."

[4] See table of distances traversed day by day, in Edwards's *Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*, Appendix IV.

[5] On July 31st, Kearny issued a Proclamation warning the inhabitants of New Mexico that, "all who take up arms or encourage resistance . . . will be regarded as enemies, and will be treated accordingly."—Text, Brooks's *Mexican War*, 230.

316 miles which still separated him from the city of Santa Fé. In the midst of these operations, a Mexican strayed into the camp, ostensibly for the purpose of delivering a message to Captain Moore, then absent from his quarters. He was suspected of being a spy, sent by the Mexican Governor, "to take a good look at the army," and report upon its strength. General Kearny ordered that he be conducted over the entire camp and dismissed with directions to tell the Governor what he had seen. So overwhelmed was he by the strength and equipment of the American army that, as he departed, he raised his hands to heaven exclaiming, with true Spanish fervor, "Alas! for my poor country."[1]

On August 2d, the little army resumed its weary march towards Santa Fé. For several days the path lay through the "great American Desert," where there was much suffering from thirst, among both the men and the animals, in spite of the careful precautions which had been taken before leaving the Arkansas. Moreover, as provisions were none too plentiful, it soon became necessary to put the army upon half rations, which new hardship was accepted in a soldierly manner hardly to be expected from men who had so recently enjoyed all the comforts of civilization. Ever towering before them, distinctly visible in the clear air, rose the heights of the Rocky Mountains, offering, to the uninformed, a hope of comfortable camps amid the shelter of green forests. Specula-

[1] Edwards's *Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*, 37.

tion was rife as to whether Governor Armijo would offer resistance in some of the mountain passes which the army would soon have to cross; but it was August 10th before any definite news upon the subject was received. On that day, Mr. Towle, a fugitive American, representing himself as just having escaped from Taos, came into camp, and reported that Armijo, with a strong force, was preparing to dispute their advance a few miles ahead; but, when the American army entered the first Mexican settlement, a small village on Moro creek, no resistance was offered. At this point, however, further rumors of preparations for their destruction came in, causing General Kearny, at each mountain pass to take great precautions against surprise, and to hurry his army through with all possible speed. On the evening of August 15th,[1] at about midnight, news came that the enemy was posted in one of the formidable gorges of the mountain, a few miles ahead, and was preparing to give battle. By seven the next morning, the American army was in motion towards this danger point, and passed it with banners flying, no enemy appearing to dispute the passage. Village after village was entered without resistance, Kearny halting to address the people, absolve them from their allegiance to the Mexican Government and to Governor Armijo, and to proclaim himself Governor for the American

[1] Early in the morning of that same day, Major Swords, with a few companions, overtook the army, bearing for Colonel Kearny the promised commission, by which he became Brigadier-General Kearny.—Brooks's *Mexican War*, 234.

Nation, in whose name he acted. At San Miguel on the Pecos River, messenger after messenger arrived, breathlessly reporting that at the celebrated cañon, the Pecos pass, fifteen miles from Santa Fé, Governor Armijo was preparing to make his stand, his position being almost impregnable; and this time report was correct. On the 16th, Armijo had marched out of the city, and had taken up his position upon an eminence commanding that defile, through which lay Kearny's road to Santa Fé. To dislodge him from such a position would have proved a well-nigh impossible task. But what force could scarcely have brought about, the terror of the American name accomplished without a shot; for Armijo, having called a council of war to discuss the best method of stopping the advance, soon discovered that his own fears were echoed by his military advisers. He therefore gladly accepted their advice, to attempt no defense; and the four thousand Mexican soldiers marched out of the abattis, which had been constructed with so much labor, and dragging their six pieces of artillery behind them, proceeded, at no dignified pace, towards Chihuahua. Early on the morning of August 18th, the American army reached the defile, now quiet and deserted. "On seeing the great advantage we should have had to fight against," writes Frank Edwards,[1] "we could only look at each other with a stare expressive of 'we are well out of it. . . .' Five hundred resolute men could have defended the pass against twice our force."

[1] *Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*, 44.

But as it was, the American army marched through as travelers following a dusty road, and "fired a salute of thirteen guns over the city of Santa Fé,"[1] thus giving the volunteers their first smell of powder after a triumphal march of fifty days. Without striking a blow, they had conquered a province which contained some eighty thousand square miles, and boasted a population of about one hundred thousand souls. Within sight of the Governor, and an army of four thousand men,[2] they had raised the Stars and Stripes over its capital, and had declared its citizens absolved, "from further allegiance to the republic of Mexico," and enrolled "as citizens of the United States,"[3] a unique example of citizen-making, and one certainly not contemplated by the founders or expounders of the American Constitution.[4]

After providing a suitable civil government for the conquered province of New Mexico,[5] General

[1] Edward's *Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*, 45.

[2] Kearney to the War Depm., Aug. 24, 1846.—Text, W. E. Connelley's *Doniphan Expedition*, Appx. This volume contains most of Kearny's letters and reports.

[3] Full text of Kearny's Proclamation, issued August 22, 1846, Philip Young's *History of Mexico*, Appendix XVIII, 632.

[4] The most startling passage of Kearny's Proclamation reads thus: "The undersigned hereby absolves all persons residing within the boundary of New Mexico from further allegiance to the Republic of Mexico, and hereby claims them as citizens of the United States."

This action was promptly repudiated by President Polk. See special Message of Dec. 22, 1846.—Richardson's *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, iv, 507.

[5] A set of laws was prepared by Colonel Doniphan; and a body of civil officers, partly American and partly Mexican, was appointed; courts were provided, and a body of troops detailed to remain at Santa Fé and protect the government, which was placed under Charles Bent as Governor.

For further details, see Brooks's *Mexican War*, 238–239, and Jenkins's *History of the War with Mexico*, 140.

Kearny turned to the task of preparing for the long march across the gigantic mountain barrier which separated him from his final goal, the territory of California. Colonel Doniphan's regiment and Captain Weightman's battery were detailed to remain in the conquered province until the arrival of Colonel Price's Second Missouri Mounted Volunteers which were daily expected,[1] and then to march south to join General Wool's "Army of the Center," to which had been assigned the duty of subduing the Mexican state of Chihuahua.[2] As a permanent guard for Santa Fé, General Kearny detailed one infantry battalion and a company of artillery, which, with Colonel Price's Second Missouri Mounted Volunteers, appeared sufficient to protect it against any attack which was likely to occur. Major Sumner's three hundred dragoons and a corps of topographical engineers were to

[1] Colonel Price reached Santa Fé early in October.—Edwards's *Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*, 67.

[2] Wool, with two Illinois regiments, had landed at Lavaca, Texas, on August 2, 1846, and proceeded to San Antonio de Bexar. On September 26th, he started west, and, on October 9th, reached the Rio Grande. At Monclovar, which he reached on October 29th, he received news that Kearny had captured Santa Fé, on August 18, 1846. At Taylor's command, therefore, he conducted his army to Parras, there to coöperate with General Worth's army.

The story of the adventures of Colonel Doniphan's command, before he finally succeeded in joining Wool at Parras, is graphically told by a volunteer in his command, Frank E. Edwards, in his *Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*, 60–145.

See also, *Doniphan's Expedition*, by J. T. Hughes, and *General Scott and his Staff* (Anon.), 181–203. On pp. 187–191 of the latter volume appears the text of Colonel Doniphan's own account of the battle of Sacramento. W. E. Connelley's *Doniphan Expedition*, which I have seen only in the proof sheets, contains the full text of many documents not otherwise available.

proceed with Kearny himself to California, whither the Mormon battalion was to follow upon its arrival at Santa Fé.[1]

On September 25th, General Kearny, with this little company, moved down the Rio Grande in search of the easiest path westward. After a few days' march, they encountered the famous frontiersman and hunter, "Kit" Carson,[2] with an escort of sixteen men, six of whom were Indians. Carson stated that he was on his way to Washington, bearing important dispatches for the President and the Secretary of War. To Kearny's astonishment, and perhaps disappointment, he further reported that California was already in the peaceful possession of United States troops, and that the American flag floated over every important point in that long-coveted region. This information completely upset General Kearny's plans. He saw that it was unnecessary for him to take the whole of his present force with him into a conquered province; and, accordingly, Major Sumner with two companies of dragoons and the principal part of the baggage-train was ordered to return to Albuquerque[3]; while he himself continued his journey, accompanied by the few remaining troops, and guided by Carson, who generously allowed the dis-

[1] Kearny to Jones, Sept. 16, 1846. Connelley's *Doniphan Expedition*.

[2] Christopher Carson. An interesting contemporary sketch of Carson's life appears in C. W. Upham's *Life of John Charles Fremont*, 185 *et seq.* See also John Bigelow's *Fremont* (1856 edition), 71, and *General Scott and his Staff* (Anon.), 219–224. See also Kearny's Report of Dec. 12, 1846.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong. i, pp. 513–514.

[3] Kearny's Report of Dec. 12, 1846.

patches to be transferred to other hands, and gave up his cherished hope of a visit to his family and friends.[1]

Following the old Copper Mine road westward, they advanced to the Rio Gila, where they camped on the twentieth of October.[2] From this point their way lay through wild and bewildering mountain passes, decked at various points by ruins which tradition connected with the ancient glories of the race of Montezuma. The value of such a guide as "Kit" Carson was keenly appreciated, while the tales which he told of the conquest of California[3] served as a pleasant diversion to the difficulties of the way, Carson having, as one of Frémont's men, been a prominent figure in some of the most stirring of those scenes.[4]

The earlier career of John C. Frémont was familiar to General Kearny, as to most Americans of his day. In 1842–44, he had conducted two remarkable scientific expeditions, one to the Rocky Mountains, and the other to the Oregon country. His able reports had attracted wide-spread attention; and the President, at General Scott's suggestion, had conferred upon him the unusual honor of a double brevet.[5] In 1845, he had set out

[1] "Life of Lieutenant Christopher Carson," in *General Scott and his Staff* (Anon.), 223.

[2] Kearny's Report of Dec. 12, 1846. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] See John Bigelow's *Life of John Charles Frémont* (1856 edition), and Charles Wentworth Upham's *John Charles Frémont* (1856 edition), for details of Carson's connections with the California conquest.

[5] From Second Lieutenant of Topographical Engineers to Captain. —Hamersly's *Army Register*, "Frémont." Chapters III and VI of Bigelow's *Life of Frémont* contain the important portions of the reports.

for a still more extensive expedition, his chief aim being to discover a shorter way over the Rockies to the Oregon country.[1] Aware of the strained relations between the United States and Mexico, he had proceeded with the greatest caution, upon arriving within the Mexican territory. Leaving his sixty companions in the valley of the San Joaquin, Frémont had proceeded, alone,[2] to the house of Thomas O. Larkin, the American Consul at Monterey, then "a wretched village of two or three hundred inhabitants, mostly Indians." Together, they had called upon José Castro, the military commander of California,[3] whose suspicions were aroused, and had informed him that the expedition was purely scientific; that Frémont's companions were civilians; and that he himself was planning only the discovery of a short route from the United States to the Pacific coast. Castro had, therefore, granted to Frémont permission to encamp, with his followers, in the valley of the San Joaquin; but, before a permanent camp could be established, Frémont had received letters ordering him to leave the country at once, under penalty of forcible ejection.[4] Instead of complying, however, Frémont had quickly established a camp

[1] Bigelow's *John Charles Frémont*, 123.

[2] Upham's *Frémont*, 211; Bigelow's *Frémont*, 133; Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 92.

[3] His exact position was *jefe militar*. Pío Pico was the Mexican Governor. See I. B. Richman's *California under Spain and Mexico*, Appendix C, for list of Governors of California up to 1847.

[4] Castro's sudden change was due to compelling instructions regarding Frémont, which had just arrived from the city of Mexico.—Bigelow's *Frémont*, 133.

upon the "Pico del Gabellan," or Hawk's Peak, a rough mountain commanding the plains of the San Juan and the village of Monterey. This he had fortified as well as circumstances permitted, determined, as he wrote to Larkin, "if unjustly attacked" to "fight to extremity and refuse quarter, trusting to our country to avenge our death."[1] This letter having been brought to the eyes of Castro, no attack had been made upon the Hawk's Peak; but a way of escape had been prudently left open for the bold adventurer, of which, after four days, he deemed it wise to avail himself, being unwilling to precipitate hostilities between the two nations already on the verge of war. "My sense of duty," Frémont later wrote to his wife[2] " did not permit me to fight them; but we retired slowly and growlingly before a force of three or four hundred men and three pieces of artillery." The next day Castro had entered the deserted camp, and had issued a proclamation, declaring that Captain Frémont and a band of highwaymen had invaded the country, but had been driven out; and he showed certain tent-poles, saddles, and other abandoned camp luggage as the spoils of his victory.

Meanwhile, Frémont had proceeded northward, and, by the middle of May, had reached Lake Tlamath in the Oregon territory.[3] Here he had

[1] J. C. Frémont to Thomas O. Larkin, March 10, 1846.—Text, Bigelow's *Frémont*, 135.

[2] Quoted in Frost's *Pictorial History of Mexico and the War*, 442.

[3] On May 27, 1846, Captain Frémont was advanced to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.—Hamersly's *Army Register*, "Frémont."

found the Sierra Nevadas still covered with snow, and almost impassable, in front of him, and the passes of the mountains, north and east, beset by bands of hostile Indians, whom the messengers of Castro had excited against him; while in the rear, as he was informed, Castro himself was assembling troops.[1] While still deliberating, as to which of these difficulties he would face, the question had been settled for him by the arrival of two of his old followers, asking assistance for a United States officer bearing dispatches from Washington. The officer had proved to be Lieutenant Gillespie, one of the chief objects of whose journey was to find Colonel Frémont, and deliver to him certain verbal communications from the Secretary of State. What these instructions were, we do not know[2]; but Frémont had immediately abandoned his plan of returning to the United States by way of the Columbia and Missouri rivers, and had returned to California, there to employ his talents for overthrowing the existing government. This decision was made on June 6th,[3] more than a month after Congress had declared war against Mexico; but of that declaration, and of the stirring events already enacted on the Rio Grande, Frémont was as

[1] Mr. Marcy's Report on Frémont's Explorations.—Text, Bigelow's *Frémont*, 149.

[2] Colonel Benton, Frémont's father-in-law, and a partizan witness, says that these instructions were to the effect that, "Frémont should watch and counteract any foreign scheme on California."—*Thirty Years' View*, ii, 689.

[3] Mr. Marcy's Report on Frémont's Explorations.—Text, Bigelow's *Frémont*, 147-152.

yet ignorant. It is doubtless true, however, that he acted as he knew he was expected to act; for it is certain that Lieutenant Gillespie's long and dangerous journey had not been undertaken for the purpose of delivering trivial verbal instructions to an explorer in the wilds of northern California.[1]

His decision once formed, Frémont moved with characteristic rapidity. At daylight of June 11th, he surprised an officer and fifteen men taking two hundred head of horses to Castro's camp; and, though releasing the prisoners, he retained the horses for the use of the Americans, or Californians, who should join in revolt against the Mexican rule.[2] A few days later, he reached Sonoma, a little village just north of San Francisco, where he found a revolutionary government, headed by William B. Ide, already in control of the region. On June 15th, Ide had issued a proclamation,[3] calling upon the inhabitants of California to join him in overthrowing the Mexican Government in the region. Two hundred and seventy-two men had responded; General Castro had been driven across the bay; and the "Bear Flag Government," as it was called, had been left "in undisturbed posses-

[1] Polk's *Diary*, under date, October 30, 1845, says that Lieutenant Gillespie had called upon him, "on the subject of a secret mission on which he was about to go to California. His secret instructions and the letter to Mr. Larkin, U. S. Consul at Monterey . . . will explain the object of his mission." The letter is printed in Moore's *Buchanan*, vi, 275.

[2] Marcy's Report on Frémont's Explorations.—Text, Bigelow's *Frémont*, 147–152.

[3] Text, Simeon Ide's *Conquest of California by the Bear Flag Party*, 138–140. This little volume gives the detailed history of the "Bear Flag Revolution," as told by its leader, Honorable William Brown Ide.

sion of all California north and east of the San Joaquin River."[1]

Wisely building upon what had already been accomplished, Frémont convened an assembly of "Bear Men," pledged his support to the purposes which had been announced in the proclamation of June 15th,[2] secured the adoption of a declaration of independence, and, from that time on, until his meeting with the American commodores, Sloat and Stockton, carried on his operations under the "Bear Flag."[3]

His next move was against Castro who had established himself with four hundred men and two field-pieces at Santa Clara, just across San Francisco Bay. A march of three days brought him to the American settlements on the Rio de los Americanos,[4] where he learned that the Mexican commander had abandoned his position, and was rapidly retreating to Ciudad de los Angelos,[5] four hundred miles to the south of San Francisco. Frémont instantly prepared to follow; but, before the

[1] Simeon Ide's *Conquest of California by the Bear Flag Party*, 192.

[2] On July 9, 1846, Castro wrote to Commodore Sloat, who had just arrived at Monterey, that "a band of adventurers headed by J. C. Frémont, a Captain in the United States Army, forcibly took possession of the port of Sonoma, hoisting an unknown flag, making prisoners of the chiefs and officers there, and committing assassinations, and every kind of injury to the lives and property of the inhabitants."—Text, Cadmus M. Wilcox's *History of the Mexican War*, 131.

[3] Benton's *Thirty Years' View*, ii, 692. "The fate of California," adds Benton, "would have been the same, whether the United States squadrons had arrived or not, and whether the Mexican War had happened or not. . . . Its incorporation with the American Republic was equally sure in any and every event."

[4] A branch of the Sacramento.

[5] Los Angeles, then the seat of the Governor-General of California.

advance was sounded, news reached him that war had been declared between the United States and Mexico, and that Monterey had been taken by an American squadron under Commodore Sloat, on July 6th.[1]

The details of this achievement were soon received. Commodore Sloat, in command of the Pacific squadron, had been for some months hovering about the Mexican port of Mazatlan, watching the British squadron which had been sent to the Pacific soon after the United States had annexed Texas. The British Admiral, Seymour, had also kept a close watch upon Sloat's movements, evidently waiting for a declaration of war between Mexico and the United States to give him an excuse to, "protect the British interests in California." Just what England's designs were, it is difficult to say; but she had long claimed the Oregon region, and was known to cherish a deep interest in the magnificent harbor of San Francisco. On June 7th, Sloat had received news of the attack upon Taylor's army on the eastern side of the Rio Grande. Interpreting this to mean war, although no news of a declaration of war had reached him, he had determined to rid himself of his too attentive neighbor, and had accordingly left the coast, sailing west as if bound for the Sandwich Islands. Seymour had instantly followed; but, by a quick turn in the night, Sloat had eluded him, and re-

[1] Mr. Marcy's Report on Frémont's Explorations. Polk's *Diary*, ii, 108. Young's *History of Mexico*, Appendix XIX for text of Sloat's proclamation.

turned to the coast, appearing, on July 2d,[1] before Monterey. Here news of Frémont's operations had reached him; and, supposing that they had been carried out by order of the American Government, Sloat had felt no hesitation about committing an act of war. He had, therefore, landed his men, seized the town, and raised the American flag. He had then sent a summons to Castro, demanding the surrender of, "all troops, arms, munitions and public property of every description under your control and jurisdiction in California," as the two nations, the United States and Mexico "are actually at war."[2] Two days later, a similar summons had been sent to the Governor, Don Pío Pico, at Santa Barbara[3]; and a proclamation had been posted throughout the village of Monterey, declaring that war existed by the act of Mexico, and that California would henceforth be a part of the territory of the United States.[4]

Upon receiving the information that an American squadron was off Monterey, Frémont's natural course was to seek its coöperation, in his efforts to overtake the fugitive, Castro. He, accordingly, turned his motley army southward, and on July 19th, entered the town. A British lieutenant, Frederick Walpole, thus describes the entry: "A

[1] Benton's *Thirty Years' View*, ii, 692.

[2] Full text, Wilcox *History of the Mexican War*, 134.

[3] Full text, dated July 9, 1846, Wilcox *History of the Mexican War*, 134.

[4] Text of Sloat's "Proclamation to the inhabitants of California," dated "U. S. ship *Savannah*, Harbor of Monterey, July 6, 1846."—Young's *History of Mexico*, Appendix XIX.

vast cloud of dust appeared first, and thence, in long file, emerged this wildest wild party. Frémont rode ahead, a spare, active-looking man with such an eye! He was dressed in a blouse and leggings, and wore a felt hat. After him came five Delaware Indians, ... his body-guard. . . . The rest, many of them blacker than Indians, rode two and two, the rifle held by one hand across the pummel of the saddle. . . . He has one or two with him who enjoy a high reputation in the prairies. Kit Carson is as well known there as 'the Duke' is in Europe."[1]

Upon boarding Sloat's vessel, Frémont discovered that, like himself, the Commodore was without definite, and tangible authority for the acts of war which he had committed in California. To the Mexicans, his attacks had appeared mere brigandage, as the news of the declaration of war had not yet reached them. Commodore Stockton, who had arrived at Monterey a few days before Frémont, declares,[2] "the most lively indignation and bitter resentment pervaded the country; . . . and things had assumed a critical and alarming appearance." Stockton was, thus, quite conscious of the difficulties of his position when, on July 29th, Commodore Sloat sailed for home, leaving him the task of adjusting affairs in California. To Captain Frémont and Lieutenant Gillespie he made the offer that, "if they, together with the men whom they had raised, would volunteer to serve under my

[1] Bigelow's *Life of John C. Frémont*, 159–160.
[2] *Life of Commodore Robert F. Stockton* (Anon.), 18.

command, . . . I would form them into a battalion, appointing the former Major and the latter Captain."[1] The offer was accepted and the remnant of the "Bear Flag Republic" was received into the service of the United States, and turned with enthusiasm to the task of aiding the process of completing the conquest of California. The knowledge that war had been actually declared rendered that task easier; for Frémont and Stockton could now act without the uncomfortable consciousness of being without specific authority.

Frémont, with his "California volunteers," sailed for San Diego on July 25th, with the hope of cutting off Castro's retreat toward Mexico. Commodore Stockton, with three hundred and sixty sailors and marines, was to follow speedily on the frigate, *Congress*, and, landing at San Pedro, to march against Castro's camp, three miles from Los Angeles. Here Frémont was to join him for an attack upon that city. These plans were easily executed, as Castro and Pío Pico, after sending a fierce verbal defiance to their pursuers, abandoned their camp, without offering battle, and fled toward Mexico. On August 13th,[2] Frémont and Stockton entered the city of Los Angeles, unresisted, and raised the American flag over the capital.

This done, and the few remaining villages in the region having been secured, Stockton sent a dispatch to the Navy Department[3] declaring, "I

[1] *Life of Commodore Robert F. Stockton* (Anon.), Appx. 19. [2] *Ibid.*, 21.
[3] Dated August 28, 1846. Text quoted in Frost's *Pictorial History of Mexico and the War*, 450.

now have the honor to inform you that the flag of the United States is flying from every commanding position in the territory of California, and that this rich and beautiful country belongs to the United States, and is forever free from Mexican dominion."[1]

From the lips of his guide, "Kit" Carson, and from various other sources, before he had reached the immediate vicinity of Los Angeles, General Kearny was informed of the main facts concerning the conquest of California,[2] and, in response to a letter which he sent forward to Commodore Stockton, he was met, on December 5th, by a small detachment[3] under Lieutenant Gillespie, who reported that Stockton, on the second of September, had withdrawn most of the American troops from Los Angeles to San Francisco, intending to join Frémont in a projected attack upon Acapulco and Mazatlan.[4] A small garrison of nineteen volunteers, with a few pieces of ordnance under Gillespie himself, had been left to garrison the capital; but

[1] For account of insurrections subsequent to this dispatch, see Brooks's *History of the Mexican War*, 250–265; Jenkins's *History of the War with Mexico*, 141–148.

[2] Kearny's Report of Dec. 12, 1846.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 513.

[3] Gillespie's force is given in Commodore Stockton's report. See Bigelow's *Frémont*, 178–179; and *Life of Stockton* (Anon.), 26.

[4] Details of this movement are given in Commodore Stockton's report. —*Ibid.*, 171–172. The plan, as Stockton explains it, was to "sail for the southern part of Mexico, capture Acapulco, and, having secured proper positions on the coast, to march into the interior, advance toward the city of Mexico, and thus to coöperate with the anticipated movements of General Taylor (now approaching in Nuevo Leon), or produce a powerful diversion which would materially aid him in his operations."

they had been quickly overwhelmed by revolutionists, and compelled to retire to the *Savannah*, lying off San Pedro. Gillespie also reported that the little garrison at Santa Barbara, a hundred miles from Los Angeles, had been taken by the insurgents, and that its commandant had succeeded in making good his escape to Monterey, carrying the tidings of disaster.

This information caused Kearny to feel that he was not, after all, too late to be of service in the work of conquering California; and he promptly prepared his little force for an attack upon a body of two hundred and eighty revolutionists who were stationed at San Pasqual, only nine miles away. In spite of the fatigue of the long journey from Santa Fé, his men were eager for the engagement; and, at two o'clock on the following morning,[1] they were ordered to advance. Before the rising of the sun, their victory was complete; the enemy was routed; and the little remnant of the "Army of the West" was enjoying, for the first time during their painful progress across a continent, the sensations of soldiers who had faced an enemy. The battle of San Pasqual, as this little engagement is called, short though it was, cost the lives of nineteen Americans, while others, including Kearny and Gillespie, were wounded.[2]

[1] Dec. 6, 1846, Niles, lxxii, 128.

[2] For text of Kearny's own account of the battle of San Pasqual, see his Report of Dec. 13, 1846.—Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 515 *et seq.* See also Stockton's Report of Feb. 18, 1848 (*Life of Commodore Robert F. Stockton*, Anon., Appx. 26), which represents this engagement as a defeat for Kearny.

After burying their dead, the little army, seriously encumbered by the care of the disabled, pushed on toward San Diego, their way flanked by hovering bodies of the enemy, who, however, did not venture upon another general engagement.[1] Carson, with a couple of kindred spirits, was sent ahead, to request an escort from Commodore Stockton; and, on December 11th, it appeared, one hundred and eighty strong, bringing not only assistance and protection, but the food and raiment which were so sorely needed by the weary travelers, whose feet had pressed the soil of over a thousand miles of wilderness.

On December 12th, they entered San Diego, where Commodore Stockton received them, "in the kindest and most respectful manner."[2] Here, during the next two weeks, plans were completed for the reconquest of Los Angeles, which was quickly accomplished, at the expense of two spirited engagements.[3] On January 10, 1847, General Kearny, who had assumed command of the combined army of about five hundred men, entered the city, unopposed; and, four days later, Frémont arrived at the head of a force of four hundred volunteers, bringing the joyful tidings that, on the previous day, a treaty of peace had been agreed upon between his men and the representatives of

[1] Kearny's Report of Dec. 13, 1846.

[2] Report of Commodore Stockton on his operations on the coast of the Pacific.

[3] The battles on the Rio San Gabriel, and on the plains of the Mesa, Jan. 8 and 9, 1847. Details, Commodore Stockton's Report of Feb. 18, 1848.

the Mexican authorities in California. This treaty[1] marks the final surrender of California to the United States, and ended the war, so far as this region was concerned. "No hostile arm was ever again lifted, except in the ordinary form of local Indian outbreaks, within the limits of that state, against the authority of the United States."[2]

[1] Jan. 13, 1847. It bound all Californians to surrender their arms, with the pledge not to resume them again during the continuance of the war between the United States and Mexico. The treaty was signed at Cahuenga by commissioners appointed by "J. C. Frémont, Lieutenant-Colonel U. S. Army, and Military Commandant of California, and Andrés Pico, Commandant of Squadron and Chief of the National Forces of California." Mr. Upham's *Memoir;* Bigelow's *Frémont*, 187; Irving Berdine Richman's *California under Spain and Mexico*, 330.

[2] Upham's *Memoir*.

CHAPTER VIII

BUENA VISTA

FEBRUARY 22–23, 1847.

IN the general plan of campaign which had been arranged, in June, 1846, President Polk and the War Department had provided for an army to be known as the "Army of the Center," which was to be placed under the command of Brigadier-General John E. Wool.[1] Its mission was to be the conquest of the north-eastern states of the Mexican Republic, Coahuila and Chihuahua.

Upon receiving news of his appointment, Wool started at once for Washington, to prepare for the task of mustering volunteers. By August 2d, he landed at Lavaca, Texas, with two Illinois regiments, on his way to San Antonio de Bexar, the general rendezvous appointed by the War Department. Heat, rain, and mud annoyed him all along the route; and the heavily loaded wagons could move but slowly. Besides which, writes a frantic volunteer, the troops were, "scourged by the

[1] Wool had been commissioned Brigadier-General on June 25, 1841. —See Hamersly's *Army Register*, "Wool."

mumps and the measles."[1] Arrived at last at San Antonio, Wool was confronted by more serious difficulties. His troops, summoned from the four winds, arrived but slowly; and August was almost spent before the last detachment appeared, and he found himself possessed of some three thousand men,[2] fresh from private life, undisciplined, poorly equipped, and far from their source of supplies. "The bare cost of bringing a bushel of corn from Lavaca to this place," writes a volunteer, "is $1.20, and other supplies in proportion." A delay of several weeks resulted; but the time was well spent, in drilling raw recruits, and in impressing them with soldierly qualities, all of which, courage alone excepted, appeared to General Wool to be totally lacking. At last, on September 26th, the march westward began; and, on October 9th, the Rio Grande was sighted. The following day, the army halted opposite Presidio, and prepared to effect a crossing into the enemies' country. From the wagons were produced curious, jointed boats, built in three sections, which could be fitted into one another so as to form safe and effective transports.[3] Upon these, the entire army was conveyed across the river, and, after a brief delay, passed on in the direction of Chihuahua. At San Rosa, they discovered that the geographical knowledge of the War Department had been at fault.[4] Looking

[1] Niles, lxi, 89.

[2] For table showing the forces under Wool's command, see Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 85.

[3] George C. Furber's *Journal of a Private*, 244.

[4] Letter to the Washington *Union*, by James Henry Carleton, Captain of the first regiment of dragoons, during the march.—Text, Carleton's *Battle of Buena Vista*, Appendix A, 170.

westward for a road to Chihuahua, General Wool saw only the lofty peaks of the Sierra Gorda, dark and forbidding, without a single defile through which the army could pass.[1] A wide détour was, therefore, inevitable; and, accordingly, they took the road leading toward the South, which brought them, on October 29th to Monclova, the ancient capital of the state of Coahuila, where they were received with marked courtesy, although the Prefect soothed his Mexican conscience, by presenting a protest against the occupation of his territory.

Here Wool began preparations for his intended march against Chihuahua; but, upon receipt of the news that General Kearny had occupied Santa Fé, and had received the surrender of the whole of New Mexico, such an expedition appeared to him useless. "What is to be gained by going to Chihuahua?" he wrote to General Taylor, then at Monterey. In reply, Taylor ordered that the proposed attack be abandoned, and that General Wool advance his army to Parras, to coöperate with General Worth.[2] This meant the absorption of the "Army of the Center" into the "Army of Occupation"; but it also meant that General Wool's army was to win the glory which came to every American who fought at Buena Vista, since after a fortnight at Parras, Wool received a re-

[1] Furber's *Journal of a Private*, 245, quoting the report of Captain Hughes, topographical engineer.

[2] Taylor was not generous in his view of Wool's position. "General Wool's column has turned out an entire failure, which I expected from the first would be the case," he wrote to Dr. Wood, on Nov. 26, 1846. —Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 71.

quest from General Worth to join him at Saltillo, "to assist in repelling an attack, then daily expected from the enemy in force under General Santa Anna."

Things had not gone well with Taylor since the capture of Monterey. He had felt, from the first, that the liberal terms granted to General Ampudia at that surrender would expose him to harsh criticism, and was convinced that the Administration would not fail to avail itself of this opportunity to discredit him in the eyes of the nation. That these suspicions were not groundless is shown by an entry in Polk's diary, made on October 11th: "In agreeing to this armistice, General Taylor violated his express orders and I regret that I cannot approve his course." The Cabinet had convened the next day, and had unanimously declared that the eight weeks' armistice had been a grave error[1]; that the reasons for it given in Taylor's dispatches were insufficient; and that orders should be sent to, "terminate the armistice . . . and prosecute the war with energy and vigor." These orders had accomplished little beyond arousing a deep resentment in the breast of Zachary Taylor. The armistice, he wrote to Dr. Wood,[2] "would have expired as a matter of course by limitation in a few days; . . . there is I hear from high authority an intrigue going on against me; the object of which is to deprive me of the command; my only sin . . . is the want of discretion on the part of

[1] Polk's *Diary*, ii, 183.

[2] Nov. 10, 1846.—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 67.

certain politicians, in connecting my name as a proper candidate for the next presidential election."

It was, therefore, with a rage almost Jacksonian in its intensity that Taylor had resumed military operations, only to be interrupted by the further information, that his fears had been realized, and that General Scott had been sent to supersede him.[1] Polk and his military councilors had reached the conclusion that Taylor's astonishing victories, glorious in themselves, were inconsequential, when judged by the object of their exertions, the conquering of a peace. He had gained control of barren territories, seven hundred miles from the enemy's capital, but had done little, if anything, to bring the Mexican Republic to her knees. Polk had added the absurd opinion, that Taylor had shown himself, "a narrow minded, bigoted partizan, without resources, and wholly unqualified for the command he holds."[2] And so the blow had fallen on the man who was already beginning to stand as the "people's hero."

From the beginning of the war, Polk had cherished the idea of striking at two points of strategic advantage, Tampico at the mouth of the Rio Pánuco, and Vera Cruz, from which the national road led up to the capital. Once possessed of these ports, and with a strong fleet to patrol the Gulf coast, he believed he could quickly bring Mexico

[1] The notification came by a letter from Scott himself, written on Nov. 25th.—Fry's *Life of General Zachary Taylor*, 294.

[2] *Diary*, ii, 248–250 (Nov. 21 1846), for elaboration of his view of Taylor.

to terms. On October 17th, Mr. Diamond, late United States Consul at Vera Cruz, had been summoned to the White House to give his views regarding the feasibility of landing an army at that point; and he had assured the President that, "it was perfectly practicable to land a military force at Sacrificios, about four miles from Vera Cruz, and out of reach of the guns of the castle."[1] It was well known, furthermore, that the population south and west of Monterey was bitterly hostile to the United States, and would doubtless furnish large numbers of recruits to Santa Anna. These, with Ampudia's army which had been allowed to leave Monterey, would give the Mexican leader an overwhelming force with which to dispute Taylor's further advance.[2] Should Santa Anna succeed in cutting Taylor's connections with his base at Comargo, the safety of the latter's whole army might be endangered. Therefore, it was felt to be inadvisable to attempt to push General Taylor's line beyond Monterey; in which opinion Taylor himself concurred.[3] For merely defensive work, Taylor's force was regarded as unnecessarily large, especially after the addition of the "Army of the Center"[4]; and it was, therefore, quite

[1] Polk's *Diary*, Oct. 17, 1846, ii, 195–196. [2] *Ibid.*, 199.

[3] "The Department has determined to hold on to what we have got in the West, and not to risk its loss by pushing further into the enemy's country, which I consider a wise determination."—Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 72.

[4] It was to enable General Taylor to detach two thousand troops to aid the Vera Cruz expedition, Polk declares, that he had been authorized to order General Wool to abandon his expedition against Chihuahua, and to merge his army with that of General Taylor.—Polk's *Diary*, ii, 199–200.

natural that, in planning for an expedition against Vera Cruz and the city of Mexico, it should have been thought best to take away part of it.

The Vera Cruz expedition having been decided upon, General Scott had been called into consultation. He at first interposed objections, and then expressed a desire to command it in person, suggesting that it would require an army of twenty-five or thirty thousand men, if it were to be safely undertaken.[1] Polk was very unwilling to intrust so important an enterprise to Scott, whose ability and loyalty to the Administration he distrusted even more than those of Taylor; and he was fretting over this offer, when Colonel Thomas H. Benton called at the White House. To him the President poured out his soul, declaring that he had planned an expedition against Tampico and Vera Cruz, but could not hit upon a suitable leader to conduct it.

Benton, with the keenness of a born egotist, at once saw a chance to advance his own interests, and urged that the plan be extended to include, not only the capture of Tampico and Vera Cruz, but the city of Mexico itself.[2] He then advanced the additional idea of sending a commission of distinguished political leaders with the army, "to offer peace before a battle, during the battle, and after it was over."[3] It now became apparent just

[1] Polk's *Diary*, Oct. 22, 1846, ii, 205.

[2] *Ibid*, Nov. 7, 1846, ii, 222. In his *Thirty Years' View*, ii, 693, Benton claims that he won Polk over to the plan of an expedition against Mexico, after he had already incorporated in his annual message the policy of occupying only what had been already taken.

[3] Polk's *Diary*, ii, 222.

what Colonel Benton had in mind. "You offered me the first mission in the world," he said.[1] "I declined that; but I am willing to accompany the army, as one of these commissioners of peace."

After expressing his appreciation of the offer, Polk turned the conversation again toward military matters, explaining his lack of confidence in Taylor and in Scott. Colonel Benton heartily sympathized with him in both instances,[2] suggesting that there ought to be created the office of Lieutenant-General, carrying the authority of General-in-Chief of the whole army. Such an office, he declared, would "require a man of talents and resources, as well as a military man, . . . that . . . more depended upon the talents and energy of the officer than upon mere bravery." After which simple remark of self-introduction, he made the characteristically modest declaration, "that if such an office was created, . . . he would be willing to accept the command himself."[3]

Although willing and even eager to advance Benton, Polk saw little chance of doing so. The creation of the office of Lieutenant-General, he deemed, upon consideration, extremely unlikely; and Benton positively declined considering an appointment as a mere Major-General.[4] This seemed to narrow the field of choice to either Major-General Patterson of the Volunteers, whom Polk felt to be too inexperienced for the chief

[1] Polk had offered to make him Minister to France.
[2] Polk's *Diary*, ii, 227.
[3] *Ibid.*, Nov. 10, 1846, ii, 227.
[4] *Ibid.*, Nov. 11, 1846, ii, 231.

command, or General Winfield Scott. To Polk, this was an unpleasant alternative; but he finally decided to yield his objections to Scott, and to order him "to take the command of the expedition against Vera Cruz,"[1] leaving the questions of extending operations to the city of Mexico, and of procuring the office of Lieutenant-General to be worked over later. Having summoned Scott to the White House, "I . . . intimated to him," says Polk,[2] "that if I was satisfied that he had the proper confidence in the administration and would cordially coöperate with it, . . . I was disposed to assign him to the command."[3] Scott declared "that he surrendered his whole confidence to me, [and] . . . would show me his gratitude by his conduct when he got to the field. He was so grateful and so much affected that he almost shed tears."[4] But in spite of this, Polk had always in mind his determination to induce Congress to create the new title of Lieutenant-General, and to confer it upon Colonel Benton. This would mean that General Scott must, then, occupy a secondary position; and, to a man of his proud spirit, such a change of status would be an unbearable affront. It would have been much wiser, as well as much more honest, if Polk had frankly stated this purpose to Scott in tendering him the

[1] Polk's *Diary*, ii, 243. [2] *Ibid.*, 244, Nov. 19, 1846.

[3] "Such was the warmth and emphasis of his professions," writes Scott (*Memoirs*, ii, 399), "that he fully won my confidence."

[4] Polk's *Diary*, Nov. 19, 1846, ii, 244–245. On November 23d, Scott was instructed by the Secretary of War to repair to Mexico uncontrolled "by definite and positive instructions."—Text, Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 398.

command. Had he done so, the latter would not have had ground for accusing him of treachery and double dealing.[1] As it was, however, after conferring the command upon General Scott, the President set about preparing a message to Congress,[2] urging "the appointment of a general officer to take command of all our military forces in the field." Scott had sailed from New York, on November 30th,[3] wholly ignorant that such a plan was under consideration. The first intimation of it[4] reached him, upon his arrival at New Orleans, where "a stranger, Mr. Hodge, saw me half a minute, to communicate a letter from my dear friend, Alexander Barrow, . . . saying that the President had asked for the grade of Lieutenant-General, in order to place Senator Benton over me in the army of Mexico."

Thus it happened that President Polk deeply offended the two men to whom he had confided the conduct of the war, and to little purpose, as the House declined to sanction his plan. To the end of the war, therefore, he labored under the almost intolerable burden of conducting military operations through the agency of commanders who distrusted him, and whom he profoundly distrusted.

General Scott landed at the Brazos Santiago, near the mouth of the Rio Grande, during Christmas week, 1846, and immediately proceeded up the

[1] See Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 400–401, for this accusation.
[2] Dec. 29, 1846.—Text, Richardson, iv, 508.
[3] Scott to Taylor, Nov. 25, 1846.—Text, Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 113.
[4] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 399.

river to Comargo, where he had directed General Taylor to meet him.[1] By an unfortunate miscarriage of the dispatches,[2] however, General Taylor failed to receive news of the intended meeting, while Santa Anna, into whose hands they fell, was put into possession of all of Scott's plans.[3] Thus left in ignorance, Taylor was forced to act upon the basis of such earlier orders as had reached him. A dispatch from the Secretary of War, dated October 22d, had declared it desirable that he should have "four thousand men ready to embark for Vera Cruz, . . . at the earliest practicable period. The place of embarcation will probably be the Brazos Santiago, or in that vicinity."[4] As this order had left the sending of the troops to Taylor's discretion, he had at first declined to send them, feeling that not less than ten thousand men[5] should be sent against so strong a position as Vera Cruz[6]: but,

[1] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 401.

[2] Dispatches "containing a sketch of my views and intentions," says Scott.—*Memoirs*, ii, 402. Lieutenant Richey who bore them had imprudently halted for the night at a small village between Brazos and Victoria, where, says Taylor, he "was murdered and his dispatches taken, and are no doubt ere this in possession of General Santa Anna."—Taylor to Dr. Wood, Jan. 26, 1847 (Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 82).

[3] "It seems to me," wrote Taylor on Jan. 26, 1847, "the great object so far as I am concerned . . . is to keep me as much in the dark . . . as it was possible to do." He then describes the loss of Scott's dispatches, but strangely fails to see in that fact an explanation of his having received no news.—Taylor to Dr. Wood (Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 82).

[4] Text, Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 110–111. Taylor had received this dispatch on Nov. 12, 1846, see Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 179.

[5] Taylor to Dr. Wood, Monterey, Nov. 26, 1846.—Text, Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 69–73.

[6] "If they would organize in the States 6000 efficient men," he wrote, ". . . I would try and detach 4000 to join them."—*Ibid.*

after further deliberation, he had decided to move over to Victoria, after garrisoning Saltillo, Parras, Monterey, and other important points,[1] and to study the situation there. General Twiggs and his division accompanied him; and Major-General Patterson was ordered to march by way of Matamoros, and rejoin him at Victoria.

On December 14th, Taylor left Monterey, and on January 4, 1847, reached Victoria. On the way, he received a letter from General Scott,[2] friendly and even affectionate in tone, but containing these words, which seemed the death-knell of Taylor's plans for meeting and defeating the army of Santa Anna: "I shall be obliged to take from you most of the gallant officers and men (regulars and volunteers), whom you have so long and so nobly commanded," reducing you, for a time,". . . to stand on the defensive. This will be infinitely painful to you, and, for that reason, distressing to me: [but] I . . . flatter myself that any benefit that may result to me, personally, from the unequal division of troops, alluded to, will lessen the pain of your consequent inactivity."[3]

Orders were accordingly sent to General Patterson to join General Scott's forces at Tampico, proceeding by way of Victoria; while General Worth's

[1] Details of these arrangements, General Taylor in his own defense, Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 180.

[2] Dated New York, Nov. 25, 1846.—Text, Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 113. See also General Taylor in his own defense, *Ibid.*, 180.

[3] "A more contemptible and insidious communication was never written," is the phrase which Taylor used to describe this letter. —*Ibid.*, 180.

division was dispatched to Comargo with orders to proceed to Brazos, and join Scott's army at that point.

The loss of Scott's dispatches, and the consequent failure of his plan to confer with Taylor at Comargo had left the two generals in positions where it was quite impossible for them either to understand or to foresee one another's movements; and General Taylor, after vainly waiting at Victoria to receive news of Scott's departure for Vera Cruz, sadly returned to Monterey,[1] to concentrate at that point the scant remnant of his gallant "Army of Occupation," and to fulfill the pledge given in one of his indignant letters to Scott: "However much I may feel personally mortified and outraged by the course pursued, unprecedented at least in our history, I will carry out in good faith, while I remain in Mexico, the views of the Government, though I may be sacrificed in the effort."[2] With a total force not exceeding seventy-five hundred, only six hundred of whom were regulars,[3] and with the necessity of garrisoning at least the two strategic positions, Saltillo and Monterey, the chance of accomplishing anything of importance appeared small. His chief dependence, as he plainly saw, must be the soldiers of General Wool's

[1] "After putting the troops in march for Tampico," he writes, "I left Victoria . . . on the 16th. . . . to return to Monterey, and with a heavy heart, where I arrived on the 24th., after a useless march of near 500 miles."—General Taylor in his own defense, Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 181.

[2] H. H. Bancroft's *History of Mexico*, v, 414, note.

[3] *Taylor and his Generals* (Anon.), 151.

command, men who had known only the dull routine of camp life, and whose value in action was an unknown quantity. From time to time, moreover, disquieting rumors reached him that Santa Anna had collected an army of twenty-five thousand Mexican troops[1] at San Luis Potosi, a point within striking distance of Tampico and Vera Cruz, as well as Monterey. But, as Santa Anna was fully informed of General Scott's plans against Vera Cruz, it hardly appeared possible that he would abandon that city to its fate, and leave the road to Mexico open, simply for the sake of striking at General Taylor, although knowing his weakness.[2] As the month of February, 1847, drew toward its close, however, reports from the south convinced General Taylor that this was exactly what Santa Anna was planning; and in making this decision the Mexican General doubtless chose as wisely as his knowledge of the situation allowed. To take Monterey and annihilate Taylor's little army would have meant the opening up of the whole Rio Grande, with its numerous depots, rich in military stores. From Monterey, he could have descended upon Comargo, and, following the route by which Taylor had entered the country, driven

[1] Speech of General Taylor, quoted in Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 405–408.

[2] That Taylor entertained this view as late as the beginning of February, 1847, is shown by two letters, one of February 4, declaring, "It is reported that a large portion of the troops, at San Luis, have taken the direction of Vera Cruz." On February 7, he again wrote, "The frequent alarms since the middle of December seem to have been without foundation." Quoted in Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 407.

the Americans from every foot of Mexican soil.[1] He could hardly have been expected to conceive it possible that even an American general could offer any very effective resistance, with a paltry five thousand men, when confronted by twenty thousand, the flower of Mexico, commanded by the "Napoleon of the West." Thus it was that Monterey was selected as the striking point, and Vera Cruz left to take care of herself, aided by the yellow fever, which would certainly confront Scott's army soon after his capture of the city. What Santa Anna and the Mexican cause needed now was one real victory; and the chance of this looked best at the north.

Resolved to meet the Mexicans on ground of his own choosing, should Santa Anna really appear,[2] General Taylor advanced his little army to Agua Nueva, a strong position on the road leading to San Luis. Here he occupied himself, studying the lay of the land, and preparing his troops for battle.[3]

[1] General Taylor's views of what would have happened are given in a letter to Dr. Wood, dated Monterey, March 20, 1847. "Had I left the country, as many of my warmest friends advised me to have at once done on the rec't of Scott's outrageous order at Victoria, there would not at this moment have been any portion of the country on this side the Rio Grande in our possession, except Matamoros."—Text, Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 90.

[2] General Scott had sent a communication from Brazos Island, advising Taylor to fall back, and concentrate his forces at Monterey. "This," says Taylor, "I declined doing, having determined . . . to fight the Mexican General, as my best chance of safety should he offer me battle, immediately on his getting across what is termed the 'desert,' between Saltillo and San Luis Potosi, . . . before he had had time to refresh and reorganize his troops."—*Ibid.*, 182.

[3] General Taylor in his own defense, a letter written from his camp near Monterey, on August 29, 1847. Text, *Ibid.*, Appendix, 182.

Receiving definite information that Santa Anna was advancing[1] from San Luis, General Taylor decided to fall back to Buena Vista, which, after his careful study of the region, he believed to be an even stronger position than Agua Nueva.[2]

"The road at this point," says General Taylor,[3] "becomes a narrow defile, the valley on its right being rendered quite impracticable for artillery by a succession of deep and impassable gullies, while on the left a succession of rugged ridges and precipitous ravines extends far back towards the mountain which bounds the valley. . . . In this position we prepared to receive him." [4]

Knowing the man who led the opposing army, General Taylor could see but two possible outcomes, victory or another massacre of the nature of,

[1] On Feb. 20, 1847, McCulloch and other scouts reported Santa Anna's arrival at Encarnacion. Taylor's official report of March 6, 1847.—Text, *Taylor and his Generals* [Anon.], 152–153.

[2] Major Coffie declares that "his movement toward Agua Nueva was merely a ruse to decoy the enemy into the field, which he had selected for his battle-ground."—Text, *Taylor and his Generals* [Anon.], 184. But Taylor's own correspondence clearly shows that he had at first intended to make his stand at Agua Nueva. See Taylor to Dr. Wood, Feb. 9, 1847, Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*, 86. His official report [Text, *Taylor and his Generals*, 153] bears out this statement.

That the Pass of Buena Vista was first suggested as the battle-ground by General Wool is clear from certain letters quoted in the Appendix to Carleton's *Battle of Buena Vista*, 176–186. A letter from Taylor, in Niles, lxxii, 135, states this clearly.

[3] Official report of March 6, 1847. Text, Niles, lxxii, pp. 115–117, and Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 132–141.

[4] For General Wool's summary of the advantages of the Pass of Buena Vista, see James Henry Carleton to John E. Wool, Buena Vista, July 27, 1847. Text, Carleton's *Buena Vista*, 180. For Santa Anna's view of the difficulties of the pass, see his final report, Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 150.

though of vastly greater dimensions than, that of the Alamo. To Santa Anna, reversal would doubtless mean the loss of power over his army, ultimate disgrace, and renewed exile. The fate of his country and, more important still as he saw it, his own place in history appeared to hang in the balance of this one engagement.

At Agua Nueva, Taylor left Colonel Yell, with his regiment of Arkansas cavalry, to attend to the removal of the stores,[1] and to watch for the advance of the enemy. Just behind him he stationed Colonel McKee, with the Second Kentucky foot and Colonel Washington's battery; while Colonel Hardin, with the First Illinois Infantry was left to guard the entrance of the narrows leading to his own position at Buena Vista.[2] The main body of the army under General Wool,[3] was placed a mile and a half in the rear of the intended battle-ground, that the men might feel the moral effect of advancing against the enemy instead of having to endure the ordeal of lying in their trenches awaiting attack. General Taylor himself, with a small force, fell back to Saltillo, to secure the stores and to make some necessary arrangements for the defense of the town.[4] To him, as he lay there that night, considering the probable result of the coming engagement, the idea continually recurred, would the new men who now filled his depleted ranks, men who had not shared

[1] Carleton's *Battle of Buena Vista*, 21.
[2] George C. Furber's *Journal of a Private*, 459.
[3] Taylor's official report of March 6, 1847. [4] *Ibid.*

the glories and triumphs of his 1846 campaign, stand the shock of the Mexican onslaught, as his old guards had stood it at Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, and Monterey? It was a question which no one could answer with assurance; yet upon its answer depended his only chance of victory.

"On the morning of the 22d," he writes,[1] "I was advised that the enemy was in sight, advancing. . . . At eleven o'clock, I received from General Santa Anna a summons to surrender at discretion." "You are surrounded by twenty thousand men," the summons ran,[2] "and cannot . . . avoid suffering a rout. . . . I wish to save you from a catastrophe, and for that purpose give you this notice. . . ." General Taylor's reply was dispatched at once: "I beg leave to say that I decline acceding to your request. . . ."[3]

An instant attack was of course expected; but Santa Anna, grown cautious after long experience, awaited the arrival of his rear column.[4] The lesson of San Jacinto had not been lost upon him. He saw before him a small army, but one commanded by a General trained in the same school which had trained Sam Houston; and caution was eminently necessary, no matter how great the disparity of numbers.[5]

[1] Official report of March 6, 1847.

[2] Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 98.

[3] Text, *ibid.*

[4] Taylor's official report of March 6, 1847.

[5] According to General Taylor, the Mexican army numbered twenty thousand; his own, all told, amounted to four thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine, only four hundred and fifty-three of whom were regulars, General Taylor in his own defense, Bixby's *Letters of Zachary Taylor*,

For four hours the two armies faced one another, each having its skirmishers out on the flanks, each maneuvering for position, and each waiting for some move from the enemy which would offer a decided advantage. The day was clear; and a flood of sunshine, gilding the mountain tops, was reflected from the arms of the soldiers, and the barrels of the great guns, already set for their terrible work. At length, at three in the afternoon, a shell from a Mexican howitzer announced the opening of the conflict[1] Then, from the thirty-two Mexican cannon, began a terrific cannonade, which General Taylor viewed with some alarm until satisfied that the firing was so wild as to cause little danger to his army. Convinced of this fact, he ordered his own batteries to remain silent. With the design of discovering the exact position of General Taylor himself, Santa Anna took advantage of this silence to dispatch a messenger bearing a flag of truce. Upon reaching the American lines,

182. That the estimate of the strength of the Mexican army is not exaggerated is shown by a table (Furber's *Journal of a Private*, 490, note) taken from the Mexican journals of the day, giving the Mexican estimate of Santa Anna's forces as they left San Luis. It shows a grand total of twenty-one thousand three hundred and forty.

General Scott, in his *Memoirs* (ii, 411–412), ungenerously tries to prove that Taylor exaggerated the number of his opponents in the battle of Buena Vista. Our faith in his argument, however, is shaken by his very first statement, that "Santa Anna, in summoning Taylor to surrender, gives . . . his strength at twenty-five thousand." The text of Santa Anna's summons, however, says, "You are surrounded by twenty thousand men."

A table in Appendix xxiii of Philip Young's *History of Mexico* shows the composition of Taylor's army. The total appears as given above.

[1] Texts of the reports of the commanders of the American army at Buena Vista, Senate Docs., 1st. Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 97–213.

he was conducted to the presence of the General, who "was sitting quietly on his white charger with his leg over the pummel of the saddle, watching the movements of the enemy. . . ." The messenger courteously declared that, "he had been sent by his Excellency, General Santa Anna, to his Excellency, General Taylor, to inquire, in the most respectful manner, what he was waiting for. To which 'Old Rough and Ready' gave the very pertinent reply that 'he was only waiting for General Santa Anna to surrender.' "[1] The messenger returned in hot haste with his report; and, in a few moments, the whole Mexican battery directed its aim at the point where the old chief still sat, "utterly indifferent to the perils of his situation, . . . on his conspicuous white horse, peering through his spy-glass at the long lines of Mexican troops that could be seen at a great distance." To the urgent requests of his staff, that he should at least give up his white horse, and not remain the most conspicuous target on the plain, Taylor replied that, "the old fellow had missed the fun at Monterey, on account of a sore foot, and he was determined he should have his share this time."[2]

"The skirmishing of the light troops," says Taylor,[3] "was kept up . . . until dark, when I became convinced that no serious attack would be made before morning, and returned . . . to

[1] Major Coffie's narrative.—Text, *Taylor and his Generals* [Anon.], 184–188.

[2] *Ibid.*, 186, and *General Taylor* by the One-legged Sergeant, 35.

[3] Official report of March 6, 1847.

Saltillo. The troops bivouacked without fires, and lay upon their arms." From the Mexican camp they could distinctly hear the shouts which greeted the spirited address of Santa Anna, heartening his troops for the expected victory of the morrow. Then came a brief period of silence; and then, out of the gathering darkness, rose the music of the Mexican band, "strains of surpassing sweetness" floating down the mountain side, and dying away in faint echoes along the narrow gorge. Silence and darkness succeeded; and, amid the gloom, the troops of Santa Anna also sank down, to slumber on their arms, and dream of victory.[1] Thus passed the twenty-second of February, 1847, the one hundred and fifteenth birthday of General Washington, in whose honor the American watchword had been: "The Memory of Washington."[2]

As the morning of February twenty-third dawned, both armies advanced to renew the engagement. General Taylor, having left four companies of Illinois volunteers, with Webster's artillery,[3] to guard Saltillo, advanced to Buena Vista, where he found the battle already in progress. During the night, the enemy had thrown a body of light troops on the mountain side to the American left;[4] and, while the attention of General Wool was concentrated upon them, a heavy column advanced up the San Luis road squarely against

[1] Brooks's *Mexican War*, 211.
[2] Carleton's *Battle of Buena Vista*, 31.
[3] Taylor's official report of March 6, 1847.
[4] Santa Anna's final report, Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 151.

the American center. Upon these, Captain Washington's battery was at once turned; and, although they pressed forward heroically, the American aim was too deadly, and they were forced back, leaving their killed and wounded upon the field. On the left, however, where Ampudia was in command, the prospect for the Americans appeared dubious. "Our left line had given way," writes Major Andrew Jackson Herod, one of the last surviving members of Jefferson Davis's Mississippi Rifles,[1] "and a large column of infantry was advancing to get between our line of battle and the city of Saltillo, thus cutting our army into two parts." General Taylor at once saw the danger, and, turning to young Colonel Jefferson Davis, "ordered him to check that column." It was an order which Taylor would have given to few men, with but three hundred and twenty soldiers to sustain the rush of a small army in full motion; but it was instantly executed, with the assistance of the Second Kentucky regiment, and a section of artillery under Captain Bragg, sent to reinforce them.[2] The enemy was driven back to the foot of the mountain, where they had broken our line, and the ground which had been lost was fully regained.

Scarcely had this task been accomplished, when Colonel Davis discovered a brigade of cavalry approaching, almost due south of his position.

[1] Letter dated Beauvoir, Miss., March 22, 1907. Evansville *Courier*. Sunday, April 21, 1907.

[2] Taylor's official report of March 6, 1847.

Quickly reforming his columns, he waited,[1] having issued orders, "to fire when the head of their column was not over five hundred yards from our line." "We had but two shots at them," Major Herod laconically adds, "before they got out of our range." In this encounter, Colonel Davis received a ball in his left foot, causing much pain; but he declined to leave his command,[2] and, in twenty minutes, was called to face a new danger. A large body of lancers was rapidly bearing down upon him from the northeast.[3] Again reforming his men, he waited to receive them, rejoicing to see that General Taylor had noticed his peril, and ordered Colonel Lane's Third Indiana volunteers, and one piece of artillery under Lieutenant Kilburn, to support him.[4] "The large column of lancers approached us," says Major Herod, "in columns of regiments, the front regiment mounted upon gray and white ponies. . . . They advanced to near seventy yards of us before they could see us or we see them." Then the Third Indiana regiment delivered their fire without orders, astonishing their companions, but striking the enemy with panic. A sudden counter march to the right, their left being covered by the great ravine, exposed their flanks; and the Mississippi Rifles at once opened upon them. Lieutenant Kilburn increased

[1] Text of Davis's Report of March 2, 1847, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 191–197.

[2] Taylor's official report of March 6, 1847.

[3] Major Herod's letter gives the number as four thousand.—Evansville *Courier*, April 21, 1907.

[4] Taylor's official report of March 6, 1847.

their panic by discharging a chain-shot which did terrible execution. A second shot choked the gun and rendered it useless; but the enemy had abandoned the attack.[1]

During all this time General Taylor sat upon his white horse, calm and unmoved, sweeping the field with his long glass, noting points of weakness and reinforcing them. It was in the deliberate calm of his actions that his generalship was most effective. At one time, a movement of the Mexican cavalry toward the hacienda of Buena Vista and the American stores caught his eye. He instantly dispatched thither Colonel May, with a detachment of artillery, to reinforce the Arkansas and Kentucky volunteers under Colonels Marshall and Yell, whose position had been rendered critical.[2] The Mexican column was forced back and a serious disaster narrowly averted, though with the loss of Colonel Yell, who "fell gallantly at the head of his regiment."

Santa Anna too was watchful and his methods had not changed since the days of the Alamo. Noting that a portion of his army, which had gained the American rear, was in danger of being

[1] President Polk's *Diary*, under date of May 17, 1847 (ii, 29), contains this entry concerning Jefferson Davis: "To-day I appointed Colonel Davis a brigadier-general, in place of Gideon J. Pillow promoted to be a major-general." The reason assigned is gallant behavior, "in the battles of Monterey and Buena Vista." At Monterey, he says: "Davis had charged Fort Leneria without bayonets, and then led his command through the streets of the city, in the face of a fierce fire from the enemy, almost to the Grand Plaza. At Buena Vista, his conduct was daring and brilliant."

[2] Taylor's official report of March 6, 1847.

permanently cut off from the main body of Mexican troops, he dispatched a staff officer with a white flag to General Taylor, desiring to know what he wanted. "I immediately dispatched Brigadier-General Wool to the Mexican General-in-Chief," says Taylor's official report,[1] "and sent orders to cease firing. Upon reaching the Mexican lines, General Wool could not cause the enemy to cease their fire." But, during the interval of respite secured by this unsoldierly subterfuge, the five or six thousand imperiled Mexicans made good their retreat, and, Taylor adds, "in spite of all our efforts, effected a junction with the remainder of the army."

Soon after this, the firing slackened. "The enemy," says Taylor, "seemed to confine his efforts to the protection of his artillery: and I had left the plateau for a moment, when I was recalled thither by a very heavy musketry fire. . . . Our infantry (Illinois and Second Kentucky) had engaged a greatly superior force; . . . and . . . the moment was most critical." Santa Anna had organized his last great column, twelve thousand strong, and, selecting a point where only one thousand Americans were concentrated, had started his last desperate assault. The thin line of Americans wavered, broke, and dashed into a ravine for refuge.[2] "Captain Bragg," continues Taylor's report, ". . . was ordered at once into battery.

[1] Of March 6, 1847.

[2] Santa Anna's final report conveniently closes the operation with this incident: but General Taylor's final report continues through the recovery made by the Americans.

Without any infantry to support him, . . . this officer came rapidly into action. . . . The first discharge of canister caused the enemy to hesitate; the second and third drove him back in disorder and saved the day. . . . No further attempt was made . . . to force our position; and the approach of night gave an opportunity to pay attention to the wounded. . . ."

There can be little doubt that, when hostilities ceased, Santa Anna intended to renew the attack upon the following day; but the sad condition of his troops caused him to alter his plans. Before morning, the entire Mexican army was in full retreat toward Agua Nueva; and when, at dawn, the American army advanced to take up its position, it found an empty battlefield, strewn with the bodies of Mexican dead. No pursuit was attempted, as the size and condition of the American army was not such as to render pursuit feasible; and indeed none was necessary, for the sufferings of the Mexican army, in that terrible retreat to San Luis de Potosi, were sufficient to excite the compassion of even an enemy in the field. Starving, worn out by toil and hardships, consumed with a burning thirst, the "Liberating Army of the North" at last entered San Luis, having lost from desertion and death in every horrible form about eight thousand men.[1] Yet in the face of his terrible

[1] This is the approximate loss during the entire campaign. See J. H. Carleton's *Battle of Buena Vista*, 152. Luther Giddings, in his *Sketches of the Campaign in Northern Mexico*, 295, puts this loss at 10,500.

The number of killed and wounded in the battle of Buena Vista itself is uncertain. Santa Anna, in his official report, says that his loss "in

disaster Santa Anna, in his official report,[1] ventured to cry "victory." "The nation," he says, "for which a triumph has been gained at the cost of so many sufferings, will learn that, if we were able to conquer in the midst of so many embarrassments, there will be no doubt as to our final success." And then, with his shattered army still bleeding from its wounds, this marvelous Mexican prepared to meet the invading army of General Scott, and incur fresh disaster at Cerro Gordo.

From a military point of view, Buena Vista was the crowning glory of Zachary Taylor's career, leaving him, as it did, in undisputed possession of the entire line of the Sierra Madre, and with a military reputation second to that of no American then living. Experts have found it easy to prove that it should not have been a victory; but the fact itself remains. From a political standpoint, also, it was no less a master stroke. The American people had learned of the desperate position into which Taylor's little army had been brought by

killed and wounded amounted to more than 1500 men." (Text, Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 143–162.) General Taylor's official report substantially agrees with this estimate. [Report of March 6, 1847.] In a letter to General Vasquez, dated February 25, 1847, however, Santa Anna says, "It is calculated that both lost 3000 or 4000 men in killed and wounded." (Text, Carleton's *Battle of Buena Vista*, 215); and General Orders No. 54, sent by Scott from Vera Cruz, says there "were 4000 of the enemy killed and wounded, against our loss of 700." (Text, Appendix L, of Carleton's *Battle of Buena Vista*.) A list of Americans killed, wounded, and missing, on Feb. 23, 1847, may be found in Senate Docs., 1st. Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 100–131.

[1] Text, Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 143–162.

the interference of the Administration. Repeated and persistent rumors of its complete massacre had reached the East, and been duly bulletined to the sorrowing land[1]; and the sudden reversal of this news, the true story[2] of how General Taylor, mounted upon his great white horse, had ridden calmly up and down the lines, heedless of flying shells and bullets, wrought havoc among the carefully laid plans of American political leaders. A new hero had stepped upon the stage, a hero who strongly reminded the people of Andrew Jackson. "Like Jackson," they said, "he has been the victim of ungenerous treatment at the hands of those who should have sustained him, and like Jackson he has come forth victorious." Such insinuations were eagerly seized upon as political capital by the Whigs, to whom Taylor's sudden fame seemed to offer an opportunity. They had won their only great national victory with a hero candidate; and, when Taylor returned home a few months later, he

[1] See entries in Polk's *Diary*, under dates March 20, 1847 (ii, 433), March 21, 1847 (*ibid.*), and March 28, 1847 (ii, 444), for such rumors. Under date, March 22, 1847 (ii, 435), Polk writes that information had just arrived stating that all communications between Comargo and Monterey had been cut off. "All will be done here that it is in human power to do," he adds, ". . . but I have great apprehensions that any succor from here will arrive too late."

[2] Reached Polk on April 1, 1847. *Diary*, ii, 451. At the unexpected news of the victory, Polk showed no joy; but stubbornly continued to fill his diary with remarks about Taylor's incompetency. "Had he obeyed his orders," he wrote, "and occupied Monterey and the passes beyond it, the severe loss of our army would have been avoided. . . . It was great rashness to take the position he did in advance of Saltillo. Having done so he is indebted not to his own generalship, but to the . . . bravery of the officers and men under his command for success." *Ibid.*, 452.

found his pictures and biographies adorning every news stand, and his name in use as the probable leader of the Whigs in the coming Presidential campaign.[1]

[1] See Polk's *Diary*, ii, 470.

CHAPTER IX

VERA CRUZ AND CERRO GORDO

MARCH 29–APRIL 18, 1847.

WITH General Taylor's astonishing victory of Buena Vista, active operations in the northern part of Mexico ceased. California, New Mexico, the Rio Grande region, and the northern provinces were securely held by American troops; and all that remained was to carry out the plan, now so eagerly championed by General Winfield Scott, to capture Vera Cruz, the gateway of the Mexican Republic, and thence to follow the national road westward, and plant the Stars and Stripes upon the capital itself. Nothing less dramatic, as Scott believed, could force from the stubborn little republic the peace which the administration of James K. Polk was pledged to conquer.

About a week before the engagement at Buena Vista, Scott had landed at the Lobos Islands,[1] the point selected as the first general rendezvous of his army, bringing with him the troops which had

[1] A group a third of the distance from Tampico toward Vera Cruz. See Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 413.

been detached from Taylor's command.[1] The "Army of Invasion" now consisted of about twelve thousand men, of whom two brigades were regulars, commanded by Generals William J. Worth and David E. Twiggs; and the rest volunteers, under Major-General Robert Patterson with Gideon J. Pillow, James Shields, and John A Quitman as Brigadiers.[2] With this army, Scott proposed to complete the conquest of an empire.

From Lobos, the force proceeded to Anton Lizardo where, for a few days, it lay inactive, awaiting the selection of a safe landing-place upon the coast of the Mexican Republic.[3] A sandy beach, lying just west of the island of Sacrificios and three miles south of Vera Cruz, was finally chosen[4]; but the anchorage being contracted, it was decided to ship the army on board the war vessels instead of the transports.[5] This transfer having been effected, the great squadron set sail, the *Princeton* leading, closely followed by the *Massa-*

[1] For details of the embarkation of these troops for Lobos see George C. Furber's *Journal of a Private*, 435.

[2] Brief biographies of these commanders appear in *General Scott and his Staff*, Grigg, Elliot & Company, Philadelphia, 1849, vol. ii. For their brevet ranks, see *Army Register*, compiled by Thomas H. S. Hamersly, Military and Naval Publisher, Washington, D. C., 1881.

[3] Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 119. This excellent Journal, kept by J. Jacob Oswandel of the First Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, is one of our most detailed sources for General Scott's campaign.

[4] The beach of Collado.—*The Home Squadron under Commodore Conner*, by P. S. P. Conner, 46 and 64.

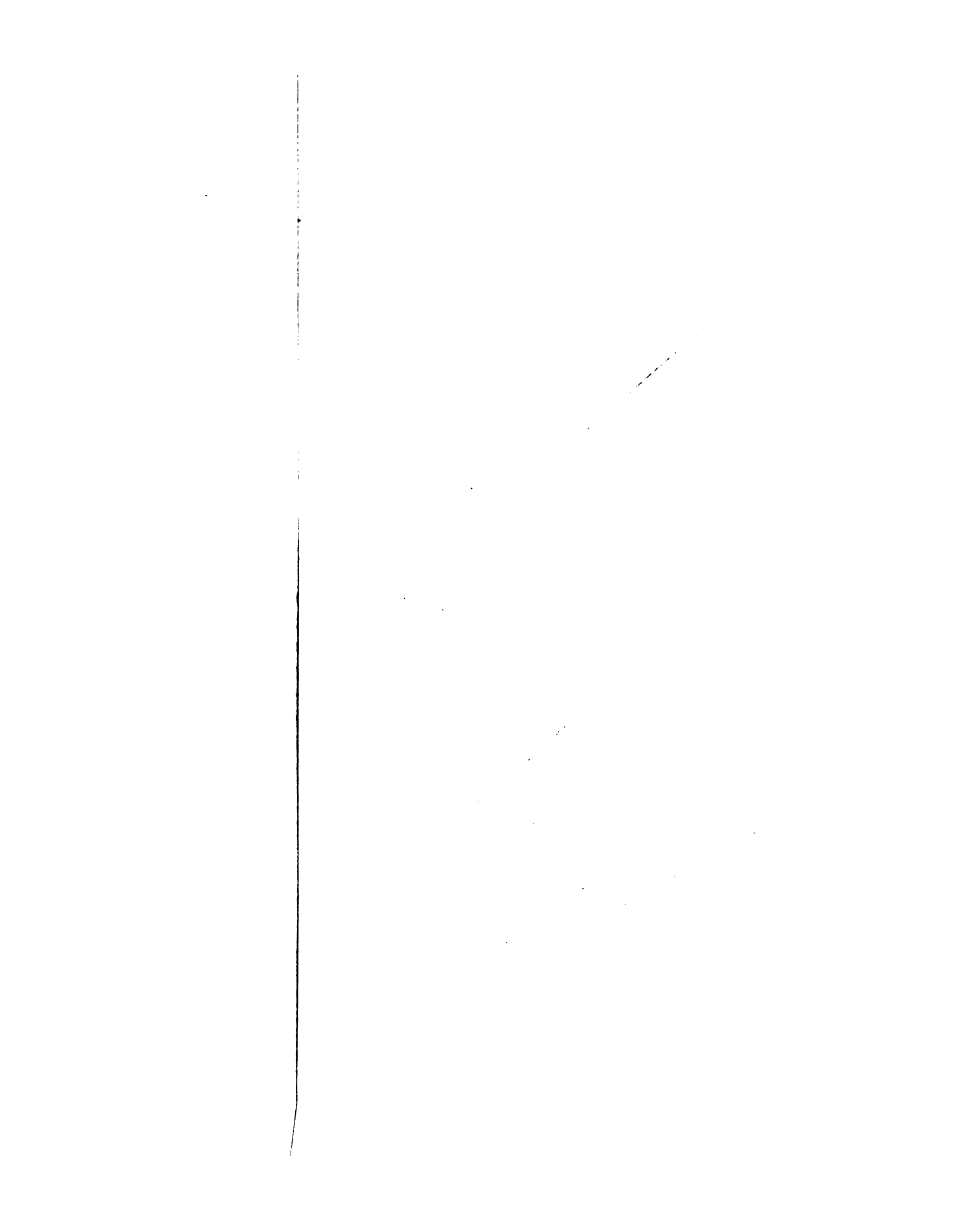
[5] Conner's *Home Squadron*, 57–83, for a memoir of the landing of the United States troops at Vera Cruz. It was written by William G. Temple of the United States Navy, and contains the texts of the orders issued by General Scott and Commodore Conner.

chusetts, upon whose deck towered the stately form of the General-in-Chief.[1] Then came the long line of war vessels crowded with troops, the empty transports, the steamers and vessels of various lines; while along the course, their masts and rigging black with eager spectators, floated the ships of war of three European nations.[2] In perfect order, the fleet proceeded on its way; and, by three o'clock, the first vessel had reached its appointed position. Silently, like great white birds, the others drew up in line, the *Spitfire* and the *Vixen*, with five gunboats, quietly covering the landing-place with their guns, while sixty-five surf-boats[3] were hauled up to the gangways of the various ships of war, and carefully freighted with one hundred armed men each. One by one these surf-boats drew away from their respective vessels, and took up their positions, "line abreast," pointing toward the shore. Then the great guns of the *Massachusetts* gave the signal; and the race for the Mexican shore began, each crew bending every energy to land its men first upon the sandy beach. Before them frowned the gray walls of the ancient city of Vera Cruz; while to the right rose the forbidding fortress of San Juan d'Ulloa; and from the war vessels in the rear floated inspiring strains of martial music, interrupted at intervals by the

[1] Temple's *Memoir*, 67.

[2] The texts of the official reports of American officers who commanded at Vera Cruz may be found in Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 216–253.

[3] For details of their construction, see specifications printed in Conner's *Home Squadron*, 60–62.



shouts of the second division, impatiently awaiting its turn to land.[1]

As each surf-boat grated upon the beach, the impatient soldiers sprang over its sides, and plowed, waist-deep in water, toward the shore, where the first arrival unfurled the Stars and Stripes.[2] By ten o'clock, the great war vessels floated empty in the harbor; and "the Army of Invasion"[3] stood exultant upon the sands of that historic coast ready to begin the work to which they had devoted themselves. Well might the garrisons of Vera Cruz and San Juan d'Ulloa tremble for the safety of their massive defenses, as they watched the perfect precision with which this army of over ten thousand men was landed in the course of a few hours, not a single accident occurring to mar their success.

Our own troops, on the other hand, were astonished, and perhaps a little disappointed, at the ease with which that landing had been effected. Ignorant as yet of the disaster which had befallen the Mexican army at Buena Vista, they had looked forward to a scene very different from this friendly

[1] See description of the landing from the pen of an eye-witness: text, *General Scott and his Staff* [Anon.], vol. ii, 24–28. I have also had the story from the lips of General Simon Bolivar Buckner, who was present as an officer on the staff of General Scott.

[2] Scott's report of March 12, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 216.

[3] "Before ten o'clock that night, upward of ten thousand men . . . were safely deposited on the beach. The steamer, *New Orleans*, with the Louisiana regiment of volunteers, eight hundred strong . . . joined them; . . . and other troop-ships came in subsequently, so that, on the 24th of March, the field return showed a total of twelve thousand six hundred and three men."—Temple's *Memoir*, 68.

boat race to an undefended coast. General Scott himself had expected that this landing would cost him a battle, perhaps the most formidable of the war[1]; and his men had nerved themselves for heroic deeds.

Their heroism, however, was soon to be put to the test in another and, perhaps, harder manner than that of facing a determined enemy in open battle. The lines of investment planned by General Scott extended about five miles in length, through a country covered with innumerable hillocks of loose sand, interspersed with almost impassable thickets of chapparal.[2] Only fifteen carts, and one hundred draft horses could be secured; and the men were compelled to carry on their backs, not only their personal belongings and food, but the munitions of war and the entire camp equipment.[3] The sun of this tropical region was already scorching in its power; and the sand was so fine that, during a "norther" such as prevailed on March 12th,[4] a man might easily be buried in its drift, if venturing to take an hour's rest in the open. But there was no faltering. Patiently and persistently, they performed these unaccustomed duties, relieved at intervals by sharp skirmishes with detachments of the enemy; and, by the 13th of March, every corps was settled in its position, with specific instructions as to its duties. General Scott then sent a message

[1] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 414.
[2] Account of an eye-witness, *General Scott and his Staff* [Anon.], ii, 26.
[3] Scott's report of March 12, 1847.
[4] Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 76.

to the various foreign consuls in the city, warning them of impending danger, and informing them that the blockade had been left open to enable them and all other neutrals to quit the city before the bombardment should begin.[1] This warning was unheeded; and, the mortars, guns, and howitzers having been placed, the army began slowly closing around the beleaguered city, taking care to keep the city itself as a shield to protect them from the great guns of the castle; while Commodore Conner completed the blockade of the harbor.[2]

Preliminaries being now complete, General Scott addressed to Juan Morales, Governor of Vera Cruz and Commandant at the castle, a summons to surrender the city.[3] "From the non-arrival of our heavy metal, principally mortars," says Scott,[4] "I was in no condition to threaten" the castle. The Governor, however, understanding the demand to apply to the castle as well, declined to yield; and Scott at once ordered the mortars to open fire upon the city. Commodore Perry, who had succeeded Conner in command of the Squadron,[5] at once opened fire from the opposite side; and, for two days, the two armies witnessed a sight such as is fortunately given to few. New pieces

[1] Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 218.

[2] Scott's report of March 17, 1847.

[3] March 22, 1847. See Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 86, and Conner's *Home Squadron under Commodore Conner*, 47. Text of summons and of Morales's reply, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 226 and 227.

[4] Dispatch to the Secretary of War, March 23, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 224–226.

[5] See Polk's *Diary*, ii, 393.

were brought up and placed, and, by noon of the twenty-third, added their voices to the tumult. The fire of the American guns was terribly effective, the ten-inch mortars being planted only eight hundred yards from the city; while Scott's men, protected by the trenches, suffered little scathe from the heavy fire of the enemy. The days were days of uproar, terror, and disaster for the beleaguered garrison; and the nights were even worse. Hot shells were continually pouring into the fortifications; the roofs of the houses were blazing; and the sea was reddened by the broadsides from the ships of war.

The Mexicans fought with astonishing gallantry. Three times their flag-staff was shot away; and each time a Mexican hero leaped upon the battlements to restore it, amid the cheers of the assailants as well as of the garrison itself. The Americans were equally reckless of life. As General Patterson passed along the line of defenses occupied by the Pennsylvania and Tennessee troops, he saw the men exposing themselves unnecessarily, and ordered them to lie down. "Lay down yourself, General," one of the Tennessee boys cried out, "or the Mexicans will presently knock you over." "No, sir," said the General, "my duty requires me to be where I am. The President of the United States can make generals every day, but he cannot make soldiers."[1]

[1] Mansfield, in his *Mexican War*, 174, tells substantially the same story, but attributes it to his own hero, General Scott. The Journal of Mr. Oswandel, carefully kept day by day, tells the story as given above. It may easily have been true in both cases, and in the many others cited in history, as, for example, in the case of Lincoln, concerning whom a similar anecdote is told.

Amid the turmoil of the bombardment, General Scott received a memorial signed by the Consuls of England, France, Spain, and Prussia within the city, asking a truce that the neutrals and non-combatants,[1] women and children, might be withdrawn from the terrors of the siege. It declared that the city had been reduced to a pitiable state, and represented its plea as a demand of humanity.[2] General Scott replied[3] that a truce could be granted only upon application of Governor Morales, with a view to surrender. He reminded the Consuls that he had kept open a way for all neutrals to reach their respective vessels, from the 13th to the 23d, and had warned them to leave the city before the firing of the first gun. He even inclosed a copy of his summons to the Governor, in order to show how careful and considerate he had been in the matter. The request, therefore, he concluded, could not possibly be granted; and, if there were hardships, surely he could not be said to have been the cause of them. The next day a further battery was added; and the foreigners and non-combatants, convinced that the city and castle were doomed, began, by prayer and entreaty, to try to melt the stubborn heart of Governor Morales, and secure a surrender. This Morales firmly declined to grant; but he consented to hand over the chief command to General Landero, an officer more

[1] Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 228–229.

[2] See General Scott's dispatch to the Secretary of War, dated March 23, 1847.

[3] Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 230–231.

disposed to submit to the inevitable.[1] Accordingly, early on the morning of the 26th of March, General Scott received a request for suspension of hostilities, in order that a surrender might be negotiated[2]; and, discontinuing his preparations for an assault which had been planned for two o'clock,[3] he opened negotiations, which resulted in the surrender of the City of Vera Cruz and the Castle of San Juan d'Ulloa. The articles were signed the following day, Generals Worth and Pillow, and Colonel Totten acting for the Americans, and Colonel Villanueva, Lieutenant Colonel Robles, and Colonel Herrera for the Mexican Commandant.[4] They provided that the garrison of five thousand men[5] should be surrendered prisoners of war, to march out "with all the honors of war," and lay down their arms to such officers as Scott should appoint to receive them, after which the whole army was to be released upon parole not to "serve again until duly exchanged."[6]

On March 29th, General Worth, to whom had been assigned the honor of receiving the surrender,

[1] Resistance appeared the more hopeless from the fact that, on March 18, news had arrived of General Taylor's victory over the army of Santa Anna at Buena Vista.—Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 81.

[2] Full details, Oswandel's Journal, under date, Friday, March 26, 1847.

[3] Oswandel to his parents, March 26, 1847, text, *ibid.*, 95: also Scott to Landero of same date, and Landero's reply, text, George C. Furber's *Journal of a Private*, 546–547.

[4] Text of Articles of Capitulation, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 237.

[5] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 429.

[6] For list of Americans killed and wounded at Vera Cruz, see Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 253–255.

appeared in full uniform, and drew up the American army in two parallel lines, extending nearly a mile in length. At ten o'clock the Mexican troops appeared, and, marching between the lines, stacked their arms, laid down their colors, and retired, as the Stars and Stripes received a thundering salute from the guns of the city and of the fleet. For seventeen days[1] the garrison had resisted, without aid from without. The streets of the city were covered with spent balls and shells, three thousand ten-inch shells, two hundred howitzer shells, one thousand Paixhans shot, twenty-five hundred round shot and shell, in all about half a million pounds of lead and iron having been discharged from our batteries during those terrible days.[2] Yet, when they emerged from the fortifications, "they appeared soldier-like; . . . and . . . their officers paid the same attention [to details] as though they had been on parade. Some of the regiments were clothed in brilliant uniforms of green, trimmed with red; others in blue, trimmed also with red; others in light dress, nearly white, with red pompons: and, taking them altogether, they made a much more imposing display than did the same number of our troops in their plain blue. . . . The officers were on fine steeds, splendidly caparisoned. . . . Toward the last of the long procession, came a body of dismounted lancers, dressed in their uniforms of green."[3] "It was," writes Jacob Os-

[1] Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 119.
[2] Table, Young's *History of Mexico*, 470.
[3] *Journal of a Private*, George C. Furber, 558–559.

wandel,[1] "one of the grandest sights and spectacles that I have ever seen."[2]

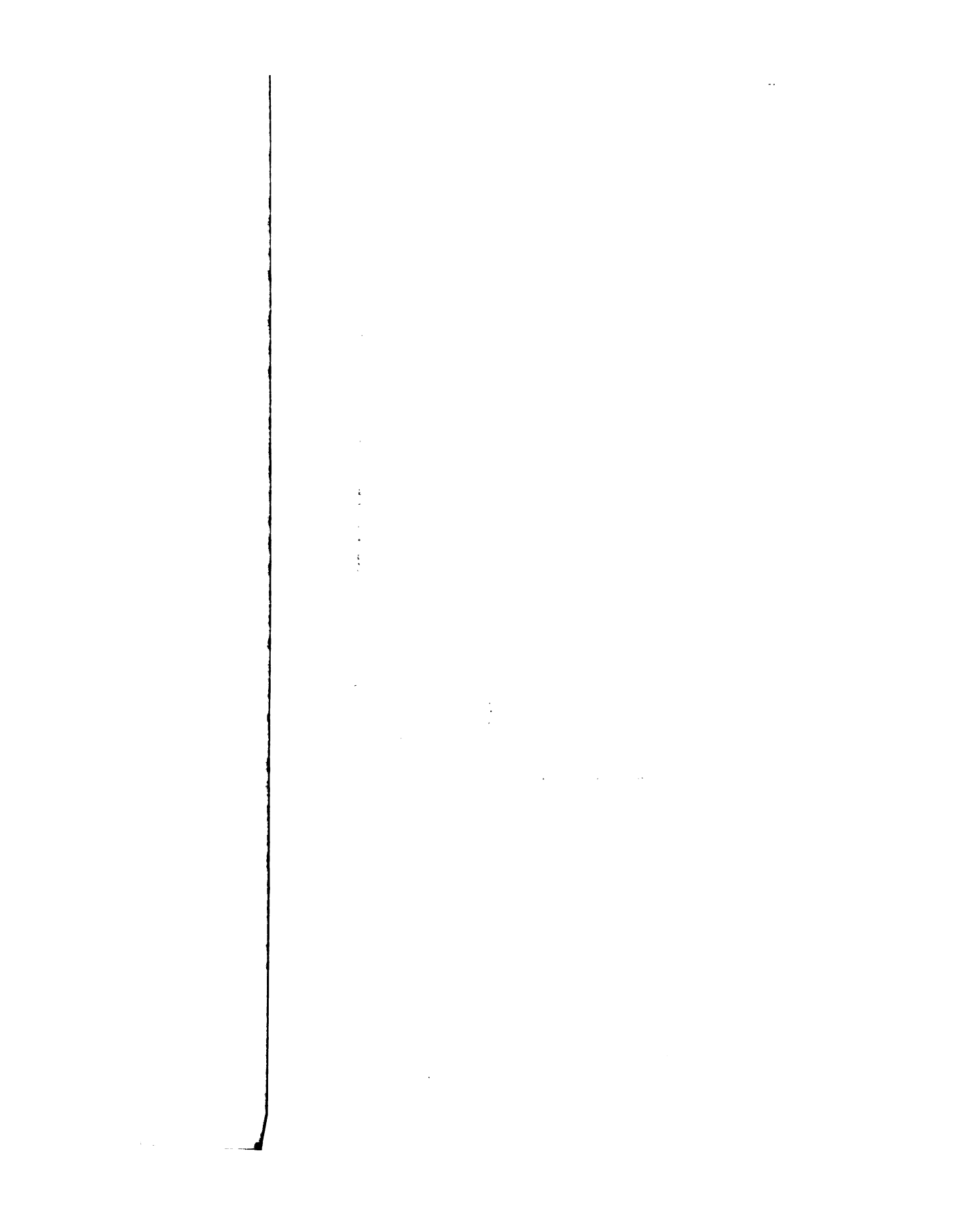
Having thus secured the best possible base of operations, General Scott began preparations for his march toward the capital. Eager as he was to reach the highlands before the season of the fever, he chafed at the presence of the same difficulties which had so often tried the heart of General Taylor. Horses, mules, and wagons for use in transportation were not available.[3] Slowly, very slowly, the supplies provided by the government were making their way down the Ohio and the Mississippi. The days, so valuable for the accomplishment of his purposes, slipped by, as, one by one, or a dozen at a time, the much needed transportation was secured. The coming of the fever, with the army still near the coast, would mean disaster. Then, too, the news of General Taylor's astonishing victory at Buena Vista, which had reached him on March 18th,[4] was soon followed by lying bulletins issued by the indefatigable Santa Anna, claiming the victory of that field. They did not deceive him; for he knew the facts by direct report from Taylor himself; but they showed that Santa Anna was still unconquered. Indeed, it was increasingly evident that he was exerting all the genius with which nature had endowed him to

[1] *Notes of the Mexican War*, 99.

[2] Forts Santiago and Conception were also included in the surrender. For details of the news as received at Washington, see Polk's *Diary*, ii, 465 and 469.

[3] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 430.

[4] Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 81.



stem the tide of disfavor caused by his late failure, and to prepare for another throw of the dice, this time with a new antagonist, General Scott himself.

Actual civil war had greeted Santa Anna, upon his return to the capital, after his disgraceful flight from Buena Vista. Gómez Farias, acting President of Mexico, had proposed, with the consent of his Congress, to raise five million dollars for the needs of the war, by selling church property. The Ecclesiastical party had rebelled, and for three weeks the city of the Montezumas had been in turmoil.[1] Just at the psychological moment, Santa Anna had appeared in the city, using that mode of entrance which he knew so well how to devise. Although so lately a fugitive at the head of a flying and panic-stricken army, he had marched into his distressed capital with the air of a conqueror. The multitude had at once turned to cheer him; and, three days later, this consummate politician had found himself again enthusiastically installed as President of Mexico.[2] With the genius which even our hearty detestation of his character can not deny him, he had soothed and cajoled, flattered and threatened, until the bickerings and strife had ceased; and the nation stood again ready to unite, under their only real leader, for the defense of their capital. Money had been subscribed, the numerous defenses of the city strengthened, and a new army of enthusiastic patriots enrolled and equipped. All of which, having taken

[1] For full details see Young's *History of Mexico*, 459–460.

[2] Ceremony at Guadalupe.—*Ibid.*, 460.

place during the siege of Vera Cruz, fully explains why no aid had been sent to that hard-pressed and important stronghold.

Two days after its surrender, however, President General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna addressed his compatriots at the city of Mexico. His speech[1] has a ring which faintly reminds one of that which Sam Houston had delivered to his little band of Texas patriots just before the battle of San Jacinto. "Vera Cruz," he said, "is already in the power of the enemy. . . . If our country is to be defended, it will be you who will stop the triumphant march of the enemy who occupies Vera Cruz. . . . My duty is to sacrifice myself, and I will know how to fulfill it! . . . Perhaps the American hosts may proudly tread the imperial capital of Azteca. I will never witness such an opprobrium, for I am decided first to die fighting. . . . Perhaps I speak to you for the last time! I pray you listen to me! . . . Vera Cruz calls for vengeance; follow me, and wash out the stain of her dishonor."

Thus saying, he led out his new army from his capital, and, within twelve days, drew them up at the pass of Cerro Gordo,[2] where he cut a ditch three leagues in length, threw up intrenchments, planted half a dozen strong batteries, and then lay still, awaiting the approach of Scott's "Army of Invasion." He had not long to wait. Scott's means of transportation had at last arrived; and,

[1] Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 259–260.

[2] Text of reports of American commanders at Cerro Gordo, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 255–301.

on April 14th, he reached the Plan del Rio,[1] a village in the immediate vicinity of Cerro Gordo. Twiggs, Pillow, Quitman, Shields, and Patterson[2] had preceded him, and had already begun the work of reconnaissance.[3] Their reports, together with independent investigations of his own, soon convinced him that the Mexican position was all but impregnable. The lofty height of Cerro Gordo commanded the approaches in all directions. So long as its guns remained in the possession of the enemy, it would be of little advantage to capture the lesser eminences by which it was surrounded. Scott's practiced eye, however, soon discovered that Santa Anna, despite all his care, had neglected one precaution, essential to his complete safety. He had failed adequately to fortify his extreme left, believing, as he afterwards declared, that not even a goat could approach Cerro Gordo from that direction.[4] Scott also saw that, if the chief height of Cerro Gordo could be secured, the numerous lesser eminences, though garrisoned and fortified with scrupulous care, would at once be rendered untenable for the enemy.[5] He therefore

[1] In a letter to his brother, dated Camp Plan del Rio, Mexico, April 17, 1847, J. Jacob Oswandel says: "Here we find our distinguished and bosom friend, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, with about fifteen thousand troops, strongly fortified and entrenched, with heavy batteries, contesting and disputing our march toward the capital of Mexico."—*Notes of the Mexican War*, 120. Details of march to Plan del Rio, Senate Docs., 30th Cong., i, 111–113.

[2] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 430–431. [3] Mansfield's *Life of Scott*, 380.

[4] Scott records in his *Memoirs* (ii, 432 and 444) the fact that the weak point was revealed by a reconnaissance conducted by the gifted young Captain of Engineers, Robert E. Lee.

[5] For description of the lesser hills, etc., see Brooks's *History of the Mexican War*, 322.

started his men to work, cutting a road which was to penetrate to the unprotected left wing of the enemy's position, and rejoin the Jalapa road beyond Cerro Gordo.[1]

For three days the enemy showed no knowledge of what was going forward. They were eagerly watching for the American army to approach by the National Road, a movement for which they were fully prepared. On the 17th, however, having observed the maneuvre, they opened fire upon the working parties, but too late. The Jalapa road was within easy reach of the new roadway, and already a movement had been planned. The Atalaya, an eminence below Cerro Gordo, but commanding the new road, was to be carried; and to General Twiggs's Division had been assigned the honor of capturing it.[2] It was accomplished in gallant style, and the victors spent the following night in hauling up the steep declivity a twenty-four pounder, and two twenty-four pound howitzers, in order to be ready for the real battle of the morrow; for already from the headquarters of the General-in-Chief had gone forth that remarkable order, No. 111,[3] which, with almost prophetic accuracy, foretold the details of the battle of Cerro Gordo. "The enemy's whole line of entrenchments and batteries will be attacked in front, and

[1] Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 114. Mansfield's *Scott*, 380.

[2] Scott's report of April 19, 1847. Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 255–258. See also Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 439 and 445.

[3] Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 258–259. Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 433–436, and Oswandel's *Notes on the Mexican War*, 118–119.

at the same time turned early in the day to-morrow. . . . The . . . batteries being carried or abandoned, all our divisions and corps will pursue with vigor. . . . The army will not return to this encampment, but be followed . . . by the baggage trains; [and] . . . every man who marches out to attack or pursue the enemy will take the usual allowance of ammunition, and subsistence for at least two days."

The 18th of April dawned bright and clear; and Twiggs's soldiers on the captured Atalaya, to whom had been assigned the further perilous honor of storming the heights of Cerro Gordo, knew that upon the success of this venture depended the victory so confidently assumed in General Orders No. 111. The artillerymen in charge of the great guns, whose presence on that morning had been secured with so much toil, cut away the light brushwood which concealed them, and applied the fuses. Their challenge was instantly answered from the heights of Cerro Gordo, from the river batteries in the rear, and from Santa Anna's camp on the Jalapa road. Amid the roar of the artillery, Colonel Harney prepared his storming party, Lieutenant-Colonel Plympton, with the Seventh Infantry, Major Loring with his Rifles, Colonel Childs with four companies of the First Artillery, and Captain Alexander with six companies of the Third Infantry,[1] all regulars, chosen for their established reputations for courage and determination. Many of them had stood shoulder to shoulder, and heard

[1] Scott's Report of April 19, 1847.—*Memoirs*, ii, 439.

the quick orders by which Zachary Taylor had directed the close engagements at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. Many of them had displayed their qualities in the storming parties about Monterey; but the work now before them was far more deadly than even that had been; for Colonel Harney was preparing to lead them into the face of an enemy far outnumbering them, and confident in the strength of his position, backed as he was by a reserve of over ten thousand men. This enemy was posted upon a rugged rock, several hundred feet above their heads, and protected by strong barricades, bristling with muskets and cannon served by the ablest artillerymen of the nation. But, at the order to advance, not a man faltered. With a rush, they descended the slopes of the captured Atalaya, crossed the ravine at its foot, and began the ascent of Cerro Gordo. Those who paused to look back distinctly saw the tall figure of Winfield Scott, standing like a statue, intent upon the scene. He had come to witness in person[1] the accomplishment of the exploit upon which, as he well knew, must depend the fate of the day. He saw the front ranks melt away, as the troops toiled upward, with no covering to protect them from the terrible guns of the enemy. He saw the gallant Rifles in the ravine below, holding at bay the large detachment which had been sent to check the assent of the storming party. He watched the impetuous Harney, conspicuously clad in full military uniform, leading the way, with his drawn sword flashing in

[1] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 439.

the sunlight. He saw the race for glory, as the laboring soldiers, nearing the fortifications, vied with each other for the honor of being the first to mount them. He saw the daring Lieutenant Ewell hold this perilous position for a moment, standing alone upon the breastworks of the enemy; the next, he had fallen back among his comrades, mortally wounded. Others at once pressed forward, eager to follow this gallant example. They swarmed up the walls, driving the Mexican artillerymen at the point of the bayonet. The guns, silent for a moment, were then turned upon the flying garrison; and the colors of the Third and Seventh Infantries, and of the First Artillery were planted upon the captured fortifications.

Meanwhile, the battle raged at two other points along the enemy's lines. The Second Brigade of Twiggs's Division, under Colonel Riley, had skirted the hill of Cerro Gordo,[1] and stormed an eminence immediately beyond, reaching its summit just as the colors of the First Brigade appeared upon that fortress; while the volunteers under General Shields had hastened still farther to the enemy's left, to gain the Jalapa road, and cut off the retreat. Here they came upon a battery of five pieces, supported by a large body of Infantry and Cavalry. The gallant Shields, while leading the attack, received a severe wound; but his men pressed forward, under the command of Colonel Baker.[2] Then the

[1] Scott's Dispatch of April 23, 1847, describes the scene. See *Memoirs*, ii, 443–451.

[2] Scott's Reports of April 19, and April 23, 1847.—*Memoirs*, ii, 437 and 447. Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 130.

enemy, learning of the fall of Cerro Gordo, and of Riley's capture of the hill still nearer to them, hastily abandoned their position, leaving guns, provisions, and camp equipment to their victorious assailants.

On the front, at the river batteries, where Pillow's attack was directed,[1] more as a diversion than with any design of carrying the strong works, success was less complete. Two terrible and costly assaults had failed to carry the batteries.[2] His own loss was heart-rending; but he had formed his men for a third attack, when General La Vega, discovering that the captured guns on the tower of Cerro Gordo were trained upon him, and that his compatriots, Santa Anna, Almonte, and Canalizo, with their eight thousand terrified followers, were in wild flight towards Jalapa,[3] decided to spare further bloodshed, by the surrender of himself, his batteries, and his three thousand men.[4] And, indeed, there had been slaughter enough already. The carnage had been terrible. An eye-witness thus describes the field, as he saw it a few hours after the conflict: "I was obliged to turn back and retrace my steps. The gorge was choked up with the mangled bodies of the flower of the Mexican

[1] Text of Pillow's Report of April 18, 1847, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 296–298.

[2] "Brigadier-General Pillow and his brigade twice assaulted with great daring the enemy's line of batteries on our left; and, though without success, they contributed much to distract and dismay their immediate opponents."—Scott's Dispatch of April 19, 1847. Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 126–127, gives a less favorable account.

[3] Scott's Report of April 19, 1847.—*Memoirs*, ii, 441.

[4] Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 129.

army. The wolf-dog and the buzzard howled and screamed as I rode by; and the stench was too sickening to be endured."[1]

It was now barely noon, yet the great battle was ended; all that remained to complete the picture, as Scott had sketched it in his order, being pursuit; and that Harney's dragoons, Worth's regulars, and the brigades of Twiggs, Shields, and Riley were even now accomplishing. They left the flying legions no time to rally, no time even to catch a full breath. Broken and utterly panic-stricken, the Mexican army dashed forward, until, one by one, their terrible pursuers abandoned the chase, and bivouacked beside the National Road, to await the arrival of their baggage-trains. "All along the road," writes one who passed over the field immediately after the battle,[2] "were the bodies of Mexican Lancers and their horses. . . . Almost every man's skull was literally split open with the sabers of our horsemen; and they lay stretched upon the ground in ghastly groups."

The next day, the General-in-Chief, from his camp at Plan del Rio, dispatched his report to William L. Marcy, Secretary of War[3]: "The plan of attack, sketched in General Orders No. 111, . . . was finely executed. . . . We are quite embarrassed with the results of victory. . . . About three thousand men laid down their arms, with the

[1] Text, Mansfield's *Scott*, 387–388.

[2] Text quoted in Brooks's *History of the Mexican War*, 333–334.

[3] Full text of Scott's Report of April 19, 1847.—Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 436–442. For news of its arrival at Washington, May 8, 1847, see Polk's *Diary*, iii, 19.

usual proportion of field and company officers, besides five generals, several of them of great distinction. . . . I estimate our total loss, in killed and wounded, may be about two hundred and fifty, and that of the enemy about three hundred and fifty." This estimate, however, he soon found to be far short of the truth, our loss being not less than four hundred and thirty, and that of the enemy nearly three times as many, killed and wounded.[1]

The prisoners were released upon parole[2]; the small arms and accouterments Scott ordered destroyed: and the forty-three bronze artillery pieces, too heavy to be easily transported, he left where they stood, one field battery only being taken with him for the use of his army. General Santa Anna's field carriage, built after the model of that of the first Napoleon, was also among the spoils, containing, as Oswandel humorously tells us, "papers, plans, maps, . . . several wooden or cork legs, and, best of all, over sixty thousand dollars in specie." Over the latter, so great a struggle took place that General Scott appeared, and demanded the cause of the uproar. Upon receiving the information, he remarked: "Well, let the boys have what is on the ground; for they have fought and worked hard all day, and deserve all they can get."[3]

[1] Scott's Supplementary Report of April 23, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 261–264. Annexed to this report is a list of the killed, wounded, and missing, after the actions of the 17th and 18th of April, 1847, at Cerro Gordo.

[2] Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 129.

[3] *Notes of the Mexican War*, 129 and 132.

Upon the day after the capture of Cerro Gordo, General Twiggs entered the city of Jalapa, without the smallest resistance[1]; and General Scott promptly followed. There the army was delayed for almost a month, waiting for supplies to arrive from Vera Cruz, and hoping for reinforcements.[2] Although chafing at the delay, Scott employed his time in trying to convince the Mexican people that further resistance was vain, and that their wisest course would be to negotiate a peace. On May 11th, he issued an elaborate and able address to the Mexican nation,[3] suggesting the causes of the unbroken series of American victories, which he shrewdly attributed to the incompetency of the Mexican leaders, rather than to any lack of courage in their armies. He argued, he promised, he pleaded for peace; but concluded with the solemn warning: "I am marching with my army upon Puebla and Mexico. I do not conceal it; . . . I desire peace, friendship, and union. It is for you to select whether you prefer war; under any circumstances, be assured, I shall not fail my word."

Four days later, General Worth advanced against Puebla,[4] which he occupied without serious resistance.[5] Only "think of it," Oswandel wrote

[1] Polk's *Diary*, iii, 25. [2] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 452.

[3] Text, Cadmus M. Wilcox's *History of the Mexican War*, 314–317.

[4] Scott to Marcy, May 20, 1847.—Senate Docs., 30th Cong., 1st Sess., vii, 125.

[5] A slight engagement occurred at Amozoc, about ten miles from Puebla; but it was unimportant. General Scott reached Puebla on May 28th, and Twiggs one day later. Scott to Marcy, Puebla, June 4, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 129.

in his journal,[1] "a little over four thousand men, marching into a city with a population of seventy-five or eighty thousand, without firing a gun! Why it even astonishes the Mexicans here at Perote." The citizens of Puebla, too, were astonished; but their surprise was due to the appearance of the little army, dusty, weary, and travel stained—mere human creatures like themselves. They had come to think of these conquering Americans, so inferior in numbers and yet so astonishing in their successes, as of a race of giants. As the orderly lines advanced into their midst, they saw only men of common stature, plainly equipped, and bearing unmistakable marks of the hardships, so familiar to every nation that has known the horrors of a military history. Though had they been able to see the real natures of these simple Anglo-Saxon warriors, their capacity for endurance, their amenity to discipline, and the heroic courage which lay under those dusty uniforms, they would have known that the rumors of their gigantic stature were not without foundation.

[1] May 23, 1847.

CHAPTER X

SCOTT'S ADVANCE INTO THE VALLEY OF MEXICO

AUGUST 7 TO AUGUST 20, 1847

GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT, "Fuss and Feathers," as his soldiers called him, was a man of strange and inordinate vanity, great soldier though he was. He was proud of his fine figure and military bearing, proud of the gorgeous costumes which his high rank made it proper to wear, and justly proud of the esteem in which he was held by the great American public. When Andrew Jackson first saw his own name mentioned in connection with the Presidency, he exclaimed in astonishment, "Do they think that I'm such a . . . fool to think myself fit for President of the United States?"[1] But history records no such remark from the lips of General Scott. To his mind, as to that of many another American of his day, he was the natural and logical candidate of the Whig party for the first office in the gift of the nation.

To these qualities of pride and self-confidence,

[1] Letter of Judge Breckinridge, Pensacola, 1821.—Text, Parton's *Jackson*, ii, 354.

there was added a certain querulousness of disposition which constantly led him to make unjust and often unreasonable complaints concerning the Democratic administration of the war, and to assign personal and unworthy motives to those in authority over him. It was these complaints which General Grant later seized upon as the insufficient basis of his charge,[1] that Secretary Marcy and President Polk had "made every preparation to disgrace General Scott or, to speak more correctly, to drive him to such desperation that he would disgrace himself." As a statement of deliberate purpose, this is unfair, for Polk was laboriously conscientious in his efforts to do his duty toward the soldiers in the field; but, as a description of the actual results of his direction of the war, it is perfectly just, for James K. Polk was one of those unfortunate men whom fate seems at times to select for exalted positions to which they are quite unequal.

While General Scott was impatiently waiting for the reinforcements necessary to his farther advance into the heart of Mexico, there occurred an incident which greatly increased his ill feeling toward the Administration at Washington. James Buchanan, the American Secretary of State, as early as April 15th, had written to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs that a peace commis-

[1] *Personal Memoirs*, 1895 edition, i, 91–92. See also a pamphlet published by William H. Morrison, Washington, D. C., 1890, entitled *The Evolution of Myth as exemplified in General Grant's History of the Plot of President Polk and Secretary Marcy to Sacrifice two American Armies in the Mexican War of 1846–1848.* By "Senex."

sioner, one Nicholas P. Trist, chief clerk of the State Department, had been sent to join General Scott's army, with authority to conclude a definitive treaty of peace,[1] the purpose of the mission being the avoidance of unnecessary delays in case Mexico should consent to the negotiation. This extraordinary commissioner was authorized to demand the Rio Grande as the boundary line, and the cession to the United States of "the whole of the Provinces of New Mexico and Upper and Lower California," with the right of transit "across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec";[2] and, in compensation, he was empowered to offer Mexico the sum of thirty millions of dollars.[3] The mission was designed to be a profound secret; but, within five days after Trist's departure, the New York *Herald* had published the full particulars concerning it, much to the distress of the President, who confided

[1] Scott had himself urged the appointment of such a commissioner, in a letter of April 5th, addressed to the Secretary of War.—Chase's *History of the Polk Administration*, 215. Five days later, Polk had laid the question before the Cabinet, suggesting that Secretary Buchanan undertake the mission. Buchanan had, however, insisted that, as Mexico had indicated no willingness to treat, it would be better to send Trist, armed with "a Treaty drawn up by the Secretary of State, and approved by the Cabinet."—Polk's *Diary*, ii, 466–467.

[2] *Ibid.*, ii, 471. In his *Memoirs* (vol. xi, 351), John Quincy Adams declares that this "project of enlarging the encroachment upon Mexico, from the mere acquisition of Texas, to embrace all New Mexico to the thirty-seventh parallel," originated in letters from Anthony Butler and W. A. Slocum, written in 1835, neither of which was ever communicated to Congress.

[3] *Ibid.*, ii, 473. The sum was to be limited to twenty-five millions in case the transit of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec were not granted; and, in case Lower California could not be secured, it was to be limited to twenty millions.

to his beloved diary the fear that the Whigs would send agents to Mexico to intrigue against its success.[1]

Upon reaching Vera Cruz, Trist had forwarded to General Scott, then at Jalapa, a sealed packet,[2] addressed to the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs, together with an order from the War Department directing Scott to have it sent at once under flag of truce, and to "suspend hostilities" in case Trist should find Mexico ready to treat.[3] This, Scott declined to do, announcing his refusal in a letter both rash and insulting[4]: "I see that the Secretary of War proposes to degrade me, by requiring that I, the commander of this army, shall defer to you, the chief clerk of the Department of State, the question of continuing or discontinuing hostilities. . . . Armistice or no armistice is, most particularly, a military question. . . ."

[1] Polk's *Diary*, April 21, 1847, ii, 482–483. "They have recently," he wrote (*ibid.*, 479), "attempted to . . . appropriate the success of our arms to themselves. They already boldly claim all the credit of the success of our battles, . . . and are proclaiming . . . [General Taylor] to be their candidate for the Presidency, when the truth is General Taylor has from the beginning . . . displayed no generalship."

[2] "I have just received your note of yesterday," writes Scott to Trist, on May 7, 1847, "accompanied by communications to me from the Secretary of War, and one sealed! from the Department of State."—Text Senate Docs., 30th Cong., 1st Sess., vii, 52, p. 120. The whole correspondence follows in the same volume. See Marcy to Polk, on page 118.

[3] The wording of the order is quoted by Trist in a letter to Scott, dated Jalapa, May 20, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, pp. 159–161.

[4] Scott to Trist, Jalapa, May 7, 1847.—Text, *ibid.*, 157–159. Scott's letter to the Secretary of War upon the same subject is scarcely less insulting.—Text, *ibid.*, 126–127.

Trist's retort was equally ill-tempered: "You will now, sir! I trust, understand . . . that greatly deficient in wisdom as the present (and indeed any democratic) administration of the government must necessarily be, it has not fallen into so egregious a blunder as to make the transmission and delivery of that communication dependent upon the amiable affability and gracious condescension of General Winfield Scott."[1] Trist had proceeded, in a leisurely fashion, to General Scott's camp, where he had arrived on May 14th.[2] At first Scott ignored his presence,[3] but, after a few days, granted him an audience at which he declared his conviction that the only way to secure peace is to "conquer the Mexicans." He declined to coöperate with Trist in carrying out the instructions of the Government, and sent home indignant dispatches which Polk not unjustly characterized as, "not only insubordinate, but insulting to Mr. Trist and the Government."[4] "To this," he adds with growing indignation, "I will not submit and will as certainly remove General Scott from the chief command, as he shall refuse or delay to obey the orders borne him by Mr. Trist."[5] Scott, however, quite unmoved by fear of the wrath of James K. Polk, persisted in his refusal to transmit the unfortunate packet; and Trist at last dispatched

[1] Trist to Scott, May 20, 1847.—Text, *ibid.*, 161.
[2] Scott to Marcy, Jalapa, May 20, 1847.—Text, *ibid.*, 126.
[3] Dispatch from Scott. See Polk's *Diary*, ii, 57.
[4] *Ibid.*, iii, 58. [5] *Ibid.*, 59.

it through the British Legation,[1] thus officially informing the Mexican authorities of his presence and readiness to negotiate a peace.[2]

Meanwhile the war of words between the General-in-Chief and the Peace Commissioner had continued, their letters becoming so bitter as to stand among the curiosities of our history. To Trist's keen sarcasm, describing Scott's attitude as one of "amiable affability and gracious condescension," and Scott himself as a man whose outward acts of respect for the government, "bear the same relation to that sentiment which genuflections and upturnings of the eyes bear to religion,"[3] the General replied in harsher phrase, describing Trist as a man who had he but "an ambulatory guillotine, . . . would be the personification of Danton, Marat, and St. Just, all in one."[4] On July 9, 1847, this petty strife was made the subject of a Cabinet meeting, at which it was agreed that both men should be censured, and directed to observe their respective orders, their removal being inconvenient at so critical a moment.[5]

[1] For Trist's letter of thanks, see Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, pp. 184–185. It was delivered by the young Secretary of Legation, Edward Thornton, who later informed Washington that, "there was but little doubt that peace would have been made," had the packet been delivered promptly upon its arrival in Mexico. Therefore, wrote Polk, "the protraction of the war may properly be attributed to the folly and ridiculous vanity of General Scott."—*Diary*, iii, 90.

[2] The text of Buchanan's letter sent with this packet appears in Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 303–306.

[3] Trist to Buchanan, May 21, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, pp. 156–157.

[4] Scott to Trist, Puebla, May 29, 1847.—Text, *ibid.*, pp. 172–173.

[5] Polk's *Diary*, iii, 75–86, for details.

Before this culmination had been reached, however, the American General-in-Chief and the American Peace Commissioner, having exhausted their vials of wrath by emptying them upon each other's heads, had taken time to examine the facts in the case, and had decided that nothing really prevented a friendship between them.[1] Scott had been mollified by new and enlightening instructions from Washington, and had consented to cooperate with his peace-making colleague, although, in ceasing to resist the peace negotiations, he had not relaxed his preparations for further war. Each day, the divisions of Worth, Twiggs, and Quitman had been led out for drill and instruction upon the plains bordering the city of Puebla. Each night the General-in-Chief had returned to his problem of determining what could be done with five thousand men against the mighty fortifications surrounding the city of Mexico. Always his calculations rendered the same discouraging verdict. His army would barely serve as a common garrison for that city if they could be placed at once within its walls. They would, even under such circumstances, be too weak to overawe the Mexican Government, or to make any hostile movement for controlling its actions. Moreover, Santa Anna's still unbroken army would then be able to shut him off from all connection with the coast, and from all hope of reinforcement. Should he advance from Puebla with his present force, Alvarez, who lurked

[1] The details of this strange reconciliation are given in Chase's *History of the Polk Administration*, 219–220.

in the neighborhood with four thousand Mexican troops, would instantly seize that city and sever his communication with Vera Cruz. Always his calculations brought him back to the conclusion, that he must wait at Puebla until Congress and the President in their wisdom—a quality the very existence of which Scott was disposed to question—should send the needed reinforcements.

Meanwhile, the packet, the innocent cause of so much misspent energy, had been laid by Santa Anna before the Mexican Congress[1] with the question, "Shall the American Commissioner be received, and peace negotiations opened?" That body, however, declined to take any responsibility in the matter, and returned the dangerous epistles to Santa Anna, with the assurance that, according to the Mexican Constitution, "the Executive of the Union shall direct all diplomatic relations, and shall celebrate all treaties of peace." Santa Anna himself was effectually restrained from opening such negotiations by a law of April 20, 1847, declaring: "Every individual is declared a traitor, let him be a private person, or public functionary, who, either in his private capacity or invested with any authority, . . . may enter into treaties with the United States of America."[2] There was nothing, however, to prevent his making use of the opportunity, to gain for his nation the benefit of delay which would enable him to perfect his defensive operations. His secret agents, therefore,

[1] July 13, 1847.—Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 309.
[2] Text, Young's *History of Mexico*, 490, note.

promptly appeared at Scott's headquarters, there to drag out meaningless negotiations until their Chief was ready to deliver his final answer, which stated that he could safely sue for peace only after the Americans should have advanced to his capital and taken one of its outworks. Without reinforcements, that seemed clearly impossible; but the Washington authorities had at last taken steps to recruit the army; and enlistments, under the late act of Congress authorizing the raising of ten new regiments, had been slowly carried on.[1] Recruiting stations had been opened in the chief inland centers, offering liberal land bounties to induce enlistments; and new volunteer regiments had been organized, though too late to supply the places of the troops which Scott had been compelled to send home.[2]

As a result of these praiseworthy efforts new troops began slowly arriving. On May 5th, a detachment of eight hundred men under Colonel McIntosh had started from Vera Cruz. At Passo de Ovejas, they had been attacked by a band of Mexican guerillas; and it would have fared ill with them but for the timely appearance of another detachment of American reinforcements under

[1] Mansfield's *History of the Mexican War*, 217. The bill had been systematically blocked at first by the enemies of the Administration (Chase's *History of the Polk Administration*, 214), but had finally passed on February 11, 1847.

[2] These were four thousand volunteers whose term of enlistment was about to expire. "As any delay might throw them upon the yellow-fever at Vera Cruz," wrote Scott (Orders No. 17, Furber's *Journal of a Private*, 613), "the discharge was given at once." This had left him only about five thousand effective men.—*Memoirs*, ii, 452 and 453.

General Cadwalader, also bound for Puebla.[1] The addition of these two bands, numbering about fourteen hundred, gave Scott some hope for the future, which was greatly increased, a few days later, by the arrival of General Pillow with a thousand more troops.[2] Then news reached him that Brigadier-General Franklin Pierce had arrived at Vera Cruz with a body of twenty-five hundred men destined for Puebla; and General Scott at once began preparations for his long delayed advance upon the city of Mexico.

Though beset by exasperating difficulties of transportation, Pierce made his way westward and, on August 6th, entered the camp of the General-in-Chief.[3] The next morning the trumpets sounded the march of the reinforced "Army of Invasion" toward the halls of the Montezumas.[4] Ten thousand strong,[5] they advanced with confidence, the General and the American Peace Commissioner, now at peace with one another, marching side by side.[6] Their long delay at Puebla had not been

[1] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 458. [2] *Ibid.*, 459.

[3] *Ibid.* Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 314.

[4] The composition of the army as it left Puebla is given in tabulated form in Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 460–465. For more complete details, see Roster of Army Officers, Roster of Volunteer Officers, etc., in the Appendix of General Cadmus M. Wilcox's *History of the Mexican War*.

[5] Scott's Official Dispatch of September 18, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 375–389. The reference is to p. 384. Table of troops by brigades, Mansfield's *History of Mexican War*, 223.

[6] On July 25, 1847, Scott wrote to the Secretary of War that nothing of special interest had occurred, "save a happy change in my relations, both official and private, with Mr. Trist. Since about the 26th ult., our intercourse has been frequent and cordial; and I have found him able, discreet, courteous, and amiable."—Text, Chase's *History of the Polk Administration*, 220, note.

without advantage; for the earlier arrivals among the recruits had been drilled and taught the more important lessons of a soldier's life; and the army, now advancing to the final scenes of the war, may be safely pronounced the best disciplined body of men who had yet taken the field.

First marched the cavalry brigade under Colonel Harney,[1] followed, on the same day, by the Second Division of Infantry under General Twiggs. General Quitman with the Fourth Division of Volunteers, General Worth with the First Division of Artillery and Infantry, and General Pillow with the Third Division of Infantry followed at intervals; but the march was so ordered that, at no time should any division be more than five hours from another.[2] They followed the stage road which led from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico, through some of the sublimest mountain scenery upon the American continent. Crossing the Anahuac Range of the Cordilleras, the astonished recruits gazed upon a panorama never to be forgotten. To the left rose the gigantic snow-peak of Popocatepetl, seventeen thousand, seven hundred and forty eight feet high,[3] with over two thousand feet lying above the line of perpetual snow. A little farther

[1] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 463–465, for table showing divisions, commanders, etc. A simplified table appears, on pp. 226–227, of Mansfield's *History of the Mexican War*.

[2] Scott's Report of August 19, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 303–306.

[3] Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 229, for description. He slightly exaggerates the height, making it eighteen thousand feet. The name Popocatepetl means the hill that smokes. Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, (1844 edition), ii, 41.

west rose the twin peaks of Ixtaccihuatl[1] which, even at the distance of thirty miles, towered above them, appearing in the clear air, to be almost within reach of their guns. The coolness of the ice-ladened breezes, the clear sparkle of the mountain-fed streams, and the exhilaration of the pure, light air of high altitude banished weariness; while the inspiring scenery thrilled every heart with dreams of glory.

On the third day, the pass of Rio Frio[2] was sighted, ten thousand feet above the sea level, the highest point of the road, and only thirty-six miles from the city of Mexico.[3] It was at this point, so admirably calculated for defense, that Scott had anticipated a desperate resistance[4] from the army of Santa Anna. Here the mountains closing down upon both sides of the road completely overhung it. Of such a place, it might be well said that, one could "chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." From the presence of recently constructed parapets,[5] and quantities of recently felled timber, it was evident that the idea had not escaped Santa Anna; but, for some reason best known to himself, it had been abandoned. Cautiously the advance guard approached this

[1] It means the white woman, as the mountain from the western side resembles a woman lying extended and clad in a white shroud. See Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* (1844 edition) ii, 41.

[2] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 466.

[3] Table of distances from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico, Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 626.

[4] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 466.

[5] See letter of August 14, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 186.

dangerous passage, guarding against a surprise; then peacefully the "Army of Invasion" marched through, marveling at the generalship which had thrown away such an opportunity.[1]

Passing onward for a few miles they came to a sudden turn in the road which brought them out upon an open point from which they "caught the first view of the valley of Mexico. There it lay, . . . a quiet landscape, having in the foreground a sheet of water; the portion of the valley visible blending itself imperceptibly in the distant mountains, which could scarcely be distinguished."[2] "Our fatigue and danger," wrote an officer of the Rifles,[3] "were forgotten. Mexico with its lofty steeples and its checkered domes—its bright reality and its former fame—its modern splendor, and its ancient magnificence, was before us; while around on every side its thousand lakes seemed like silver stars on a velvet mantle." It was even thus that it had appeared to Cortez and his adventurous band of Spaniards, three centuries before, as, "turning an angle of the Sierra, they suddenly came on a view which more than compensated the toils of the preceding day. . . . Stretching far away at their feet, were seen noble forests of oak,

[1] "Had they made a stand there," wrote Robert Anderson, then Captain of the Third Artillery, but later famous as the defender of Fort Sumter, "we should have lost several of our brave troops."—*An Artillery Officer in the Mexican War*, 285. This volume, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, in 1911, is, in effect, a journal following the course of Scott's campaign. It is of unusual interest and value.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Text of letter to New York *Courier*, quoted in Mansfield's *History of the Mexican War*, 230.

sycamore, and cedar; and beyond, yellow fields of maize and the towering maguey, intermingled with orchards and blooming gardens. . . . In the center of the great basin were beheld the lakes, occupying then a much larger portion of its surface than at present; their borders thickly studded with towns and hamlets, and, in the midst—like some Indian empress with her coronal of pearls—the fair city of Mexico, with her white towers and pyramidal temples, reposing, as it were, on the bosom of the waters,—the far-famed 'Venice of the Aztecs.' High over all, rose the royal hill of Chapultepec, the residence of the Mexican monarchs, crowned with the same grove of gigantic cypresses, which at this day fling their broad shadows over the land. In the distance beyond the blue waters of the lake, and nearly screened by intervening foliage, was seen a shining speck, the rival capital of Tezcuco, and, still further on, the dark belt of porphyry, girdling the valley around, like a rich setting which nature had devised for the fairest of her jewels." [1] Three centuries had made but few alterations in that view, which "no traveler, however cold, can gaze on . . . with any other emotions than those of astonishment and rapture." [2]

Cortez had noted with satisfaction, "that the Montezuma's mountain-throne, as it was called, was indeed seated on a volcano, with the elements of combustion so active within, that it seemed as if

[1] Prescott's description of the advance of Cortez in 1519.—*Conquest of Mexico* (1844 edition), ii, 47-48.

[2] Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 344-348, describes these changes.

any hour might witness an explosion."[1] His warlike successor, Winfield Scott, saw with equal pleasure that Santa Anna's power appeared fully as precarious. Rumors reached him that revolution was gathering in the capital city, and that Santa Anna had ordered all his military force thither, "to put it down by the strong arm of power."[2] The moment, therefore, appeared most favorable for an attack; and, raising the cry, "That splendid city soon shall be ours,"[3] the "Army of Invasion" began its descent into the valley.

On the 10th of August, the advance division under General Twiggs reached Ayotla, seventeen miles from the capital[4]; and there General Scott established his headquarters, desiring to make a careful study of the problem before him, and to await the arrival of the rest of his army. The First Division under General Worth, upon its arrival, encamped at "a dirty village at the head of Lake Chalco, whose name it bears"[5]; and the divisions of Quitman and Pillow were assigned camping grounds at points lying between these two.

Meanwhile, by daring reconnaissance, General Scott and his Staff had secured accurate knowledge

[1] Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* (1844 edition), ii, 50.

[2] *An Artillery Officer in the Mexican War*, 243.

[3] "Recovering from the sublime trance," writes General Scott, "probably not a man in the column failed to say to his neighbor or himself: 'That splendid city soon shall be ours.' "—*Memoirs*, ii, 467.

[4] Table of distances from Vera Cruz to the city of Mexico, Oswandel's *Notes of the Mexican War*, 626.

[5] Robert Anderson's *An Artillery Officer in the Mexican War*, 287.

of the locations of the Mexican defenses, and of the military problems to be solved. "The city stands on a slight swell of ground, near the center of an irregular basin," wrote Scott,[1] "and is girdled with a ditch . . .—a navigable canal of great breadth and depth—very difficult to bridge in the presence of an enemy, and serving at once for drainage, custom-house purposes, and military defense; leaving eight entrances or gates over arches, each of which we found defended by a system of strong works, that seemed to require nothing but some men and guns to be impregnable. . . . All the approaches near the city, are over elevated causeways, cut in many places (to oppose us), and flanked on both sides by ditches, also, of unusual dimensions. The numerous cross-roads are flanked in like manner, having bridges at the intersections, recently broken. The meadows thus chequered, are, moreover, in many spots under water, or marshy. . . ."

However, there appeared to be three feasible routes of attack upon this stronghold of the amphibious Mexicans. The first of these, the National Road from Puebla and Vera Cruz, upon which the American advance was now encamped, was dominated by the mountain peak, El Peñon, strongly fortified, and well garrisoned.[2] Upon its defense, Santa Anna had lavished every precaution, as he felt confident that against it the main at-

[1] Scott's Report of September 18, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 375–386.

[2] For description of these defenses, see Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 348.

tack of the Americans would be directed. One side was impregnable by nature; and the rest had been rendered practically so by the skill of the engineers. Batteries, mounting over fifty guns, protected its approaches; and a ditch, twenty-four feet wide and filled with water, had been constructed for its defense. The causeways between this formidable fortress and the city were surrounded by water, rendering futile any idea of attempting to flank it.[1] An army approaching Mexico by this route, therefore, must first storm El Peñon, a task which even General Scott was unwilling to set himself, desiring, as he afterwards explained, "to spare the lives of this gallant army for a great battle, which I knew we had to win before capturing the city."[2]

Turning to the left from this National Road at Los Reyes, was a second road joining another causeway at Mexicalcingo, five miles from the city; but this also was strongly fortified, with breastworks and batteries mounting fifty-eight guns. Here, says General Scott, "it might have been easy . . . to force the passage; but, on the other side of the bridge, we should have found ourselves . . . on a narrow causeway, flanked to the right and left by water, or boggy grounds."[3] As an alternative to these two possible lines of attack, was a route to the south of Lake Chalco, by which Scott could place his army upon the Acapulco road leading through San Augustin and San

[1] Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 348.

[2] Scott's Report of August 19, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 303–306.

[3] *Ibid.*, 303.

Antonio to the city. This route, having been considered an unlikely one for the American army arriving from the East, had not been so carefully fortified, and therefore offered far greater chances of success. Scott at first regarded it as unfeasible, and prepared to turn El Peñon and force Mexicalcingo, although the ground was difficult, and the batteries formidable[1]; but, yielding to the insistence of General Worth,[2] he at last decided to adopt it, thus completely reversing the order of the march. Worth's Division at Chalco now occupied the position of the advance; while Twiggs's Division at Ayotla became the rear-guard, Pillow's and Quitman's Divisions still occupying positions between the two.[3] The route was extremely difficult. The road was covered with loose rock, and intercepted by ravines, over which the artillery had to be dragged by hand. It lay along the base of a mountain range, whose precipitous slopes offered the enemy an excellent opportunity to block an advance, by the simple expedient of rolling stones

[1] Trist to Buchanan, August 22, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, p. 187.

[2] The credit for the discovery of the feasibility of this route is confidently claimed by General Scott himself (see Report, No. 31, *Memoirs* ii, 469). He had frequently spoken of it while encamped at Puebla, as Raphael Semmes tells us, but, after his arrival in the valley, appeared to have abandoned it as impracticable (see *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 350). It was the insistence of General Worth which caused him at last to adopt it (see letter from Colonel Duncan, whose reconnaissance, under Worth's orders proved its feasibility, in Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 358–359, and also Robert Anderson's *Artillery Officer in the Mexican War*, 289).

[3] Scott's Report of August 19, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 303–306. Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 370.

from the heights above; but the Mexicans had confidently counted upon a battle under the walls of El Peñon, and were totally unable to accommodate themselves to this unexpected maneuver. Only once did they attempt to block the pathway of the advancing columns; and then "a few shots dislodged them, and two or three hours' work cleared the road." [1]

On August 18th, General Worth's Division reached San Augustin; and, before the close of the day, the entire army was safely established on the Acapulco [2] road, within nine miles of the city, having successfully evaded the strong defenses which Santa Anna had prepared for them at El Peñon. Yet their present position was extremely precarious. To the left lay the strong defenses of Contreras, whose possession was necessary to their safety; while San Antonio and Churubusco, strong fortifications, well garrisoned, and easily reinforcible from the city,[3] effectually blocked their forward path. Each of these must be either taken or turned, before the invading army could hope to approach the inner defenses of the city itself. But to turn either was practically impossible, not only on account of the impassable nature of the land around, but because it would be fatal to leave the other behind with its guns unsilenced.

[1] An officer's letter in the Washington *Union*, quoted in Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 238. Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 374.

[2] Scott's Report of August 19, 1847. Trist to Buchanan, August 22, 1847. Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, pp. 187–189.

[3] Upon learning of the movement around Lake Chalco, Santa Anna had transferred the main bulk of his army to the fortifications commanding the Acapulco road.—Text of his order, Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 376.

Farther to the west lay another way of approach, the Toluca road. There the mountains were closer to the city; and there also stood the formidable defenses, of Molino del Rey, consisting of a magazine, called "Casa Mata," and several field batteries protecting a foundry. Above these rose the height of Chapultepec, crowned with the strong buildings of a military college, surrounded at its base by a thick stone wall fifteen feet high, guarded by seven batteries mounting nineteen guns, and still further defended by mines and deep wet ditches.[1] Altogether, considerable talent and ingenuity had been expended upon these outlying fortifications of the capital city; and it was evident to General Scott that no small courage and determination would be required to reduce them; while, furthermore, there lay beyond them an interior line of defenses, protecting the narrow causeways which offered the only possible lines of approach to the city itself.

Careful investigation, conducted by Captain Robert E. Lee,[2] Captain Mason, and other engineer officers, convinced General Scott that a

[1] Brooks's *History of the Mexican War*, 364; and Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 243, for descriptions of these defenses.

[2] "The services of Captain Lee," writes Raphael Semmes (*Service Afloat and Ashore*, 379), "were invaluable to his chief. Endowed with a mind which has no superior in his corps, and possessing great energy of character, he examined, counseled, and advised, with a judgment, tact, and discretion worthy of all praise. His talent for topography was peculiar; and he seemed to receive impressions intuitively, which it cost other men much labor to acquire." General Scott's reports fully confirm this view. See, for example, Report of August 28, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 306–315.

direct attack upon San Antonio, which blocked his advance along the Acapulco road, would be very destructive of his little army, the only practicable point of attack being from the front, over a narrow causeway of great length, flanked by deep ditches, and completely commanded by the guns of the fortress. To turn it and make his first attack upon Contreras, which he deemed less capable of defense, was his desire; but that appeared almost impossible, on account of the vast field of volcanic rock, reaching to the mountains, five miles away. So certain had the Mexicans been of the impassable nature of this rough, volcanic section, that they had made no preparation for disputing an attempt to pass it. In this fact, the American General-in-Chief saw his opportunity. With tremendous labor, an artillery road was opened across this seemingly impassable barrier; and, at two o'clock on the nineteenth of August, General Persifor F. Smith's Light Battalion, which occupied the advance, came to the summit of a hill, from which they suddenly beheld the fortifications of Contreras only a few hundred yards beyond. It then became apparent that the capture of Contreras was not likely to be easily accomplished, even now. Twenty-two pieces of artillery, mostly of large caliber, commanded the approach to its fortifications; behind which General Valencia had, on the previous night, gathered his detachment of six thousand men which had hitherto been kept free to march to the support of any point threatened. The garrison of Contreras thus numbered seven thousand effec-

tive men;[1] while, near the road leading from it to Churubusco, within easy supporting distance, lay Santa Anna with his reserve of twelve thousand, whose presence, says a Mexican historian,[2] "made the enemy to hesitate, and General Scott to fear for the issue of the battle." Their presence, however, did not prevent an immediate attack upon the powerful stronghold of Contreras. The American guns were ordered forward by General Smith, and three pieces were soon in position; but the twenty-two great guns of the enemy, already commanding the line of approach, opened so terrific a fire that little headway could be made by the advancing columns.[3] With astonishing persistence, however, the Americans forced their way forward in the very face of death. At every volley, they crouched low to avoid the shot, and then sprang up to serve their own guns. But the odds were too great. At the end of two hours, two of their guns lay dismounted; and the line was badly riddled. It soon became evident, that further sacrifice of life here would be useless; and the troops were, accordingly, recalled, downcast at the thought that, for the first time during the war, the Mexicans had been successful in maintaining their

[1] "Including all our corps directed against the entrenched camp, . . . we positively did not number over four thousand five hundred, rank and file; and we knew by sight, and since, more certainly, by many captured documents and letters, that the enemy had actually engaged on the spot, seven thousand men, with at least twelve thousand more hovering within sight, and striking distance."—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 308.

[2] Quoted on p. 226 of Chase's *History of the Polk Administration*.

[3] Scott's Report of August 19, 1847.

position.[1] It was, however, not a defeat, but only a repulse, as General Scott who, from his station on an eminence in front of the city, had personally directed most of this movement, was already planning a more promising attack. His keen eye had observed that Santa Anna, from his position near the San Angel road, had continually reinforced Contreras with troops from the city of Mexico. How to check this, and to find a safer point of attack against the strong defenses of Contreras was the problem. He had noticed that "the church and hamlet of Contreras (or Ansalda) on the road leading up from the capital, . . . if occupied, . . . would arrest the enemy's reënforcements, and ultimately decide the battle."[2] He therefore decided to make the new attack upon Valencia's defenses, from a large ravine on the western side, assisted by a diversion on the east. Brigadier-General Shields, who had recovered from the wound received at Cerro Gordo, was ordered to proceed, under cover of night,[3] and occupy the village called indifferently, Contreras, Ansalda, or San Geronimo. With him went Colonel Morgan, Colonel Riley, and General Persifor F. Smith,[4]

[1] General Valencia, in a dispatch to Santa Anna, written immediately after the engagement, said: "I have put them to a shameful flight," and added the information that he had conferred, "upon all the Generals, Chiefs, and Officers who participated in this glorious battle, the several promotions to which they are entitled."—Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 385.

[2] Scott's Report of August 19, 1847.

[3] The night of August 19, 1847. For Scott's account of the movement, see Report of August 28, 1847.

[4] General Cadwalader was already in the village of Contreras, badly needing reinforcements.—Scott's Report of August 19, 1847.

with their detachments, the first to remain in the village and assist the diversion in the morning, the latter two to continue, before day, to the great ravine on the west, from which they were to attack Valencia's intrenchments at dawn.[1]

The night was one calculated to try their patience and power of endurance to the uttermost. The rain fell in torrents. The roads were like small rivulets; and the officers and men, drenched to the skin, could only huddle together and wish for morning. At three o'clock, Colonel Riley gave the welcome signal of advance, and led his men through a sea of mud and water westward into the ravine, closely followed by General Cadwalader, General Smith, and their drenched and benumbed soldiers. By the hour of sunrise, they had reached an elevation behind the enemy,[2] who, all unsuspicious of their movements, were still sleeping the sleep of victors, little dreaming how soon they must pay for the success of yesterday.

Soon the Mexican troops began to stir, and prepare for the labors of another day; but their attention was wholly directed to the front, whence they confidently expected the attack to be renewed. The hilltop screened the real storming party from their view, and enabled General Smith, who was acting as commander of the attack, to make his arrangements in a manner which, as Scott later reported, "challenge the highest admira-

[1] For details of this movement, see Report of General Persifor F. Smith of August 23, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 325–333.

[2] *Ibid.*, 328, and Scott's Report of August 28, 1847.

tion."[1] By six o'clock, these arrangements were complete; and the commander walked slowly along the lines to see that every one was ready. Then came his sharp command, "men forward." "And we did forward," writes an officer who took part in the assault.[2] " . . . . . The crack of a hundred rifles startled the Mexicans from their astonishment; and they opened their fire, useless fire, for we were so close that they overshot us; and, before they could turn their pieces on us, we were on them." Climbing the parapet, the assailants engaged the Mexicans at close quarters; and the clash of swords and the dull thud of clubbed muskets were mingled with the deafening roar of the cannon. As the Americans pressed forward, the Mexicans gave place; and, within seventeen minutes,[3] the army of Valencia was changed to a terrified and senseless rabble, possessed of but one idea, to find some way of escape from the terror of their assailants. "The road was literally blocked up," writes an eye-witness;[4] "and, while many perished by their own guns, it was almost impossible to fire on the mass from the danger of killing our own men." A group of five hundred fugitives, including some hundred officers, was penned up in a pass, and captured by a band of only thirty Americans; while the roads and

[1] Scott's Report of August 28, 1847.

[2] Letter of an officer in the New York *Courier*, quoted in Mansfield's *Scott*, 421.

[3] Scott's Report of August 28, 1847.

[4] Letter of an officer in the New York *Courier*, quoted in Mansfield's *Scott*, 421.

foot-paths about the scene of the engagement were strewn with the dead and wounded. General Shields's detachment of South Carolina and New York volunteers, at the village of Contreras, advanced to meet the flying Mexicans, with a fire which turned them aside into the rough ground where numbers were killed or made prisoners.[1] By eight o'clock, the pursuit had been abandoned, the greater part of the remaining fugitives having found shelter under the guns of the Mexican reserve which had retired to San Angel and Churubusco.

"Thus," says General Scott[2] "was the great victory of Contreras achieved; one road to the capital opened; seven hundred of the enemy killed; eight hundred and thirteen prisoners, including, among eighty-eight officers, four generals; besides many colors and standards; twenty-two pieces of brass ordnance; . . . thousands of small arms and accouterments; an immense quantity of shot, shells, powder, and cartridges; seven hundred pack mules, many horses, etc.,—all in our hands." Which great victory was won with an effective force of only forty-five hundred men, against an intrenched army of at least seven thousand, and, within easy supporting distance of Santa Anna's reserve of twelve thousand of the finest troops of Mexico.[3]

[1] Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 388.
[2] Report of August 28, 1847. [3] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER XI

THE CAPTURE OF THE CITY OF MEXICO

AUGUST 20–SEPTEMBER 14, 1847

THE battle of Contreras restored to the American army that faith in its own destinies which the repulse of the previous day had for the moment destroyed; while at the same time it shattered the confidence with which the Mexicans had hitherto regarded their carefully fortified defenses, and increased the distrust with which their officers regarded one another.[1] More than this, it opened the way to Churubusco, the last stronghold separating the American army from the gates of the capital city.

By eight o'clock in the morning, the pursuit of General Valencia's flying legions had been abandoned; and the "Army of Invasion"[2] was preparing for the second of the three victories of this ever

[1] "All the chiefs," writes Raphael Semmes, "were the secret, if not open enemies of each other. In the various revolutions of the country, they had been more or less in hostile array; and, although they were now compelled to dissemble their hatred, and act together in the common defense, upon the first reverse, they turned against each other, and each endeavored to fasten upon his neighbor the odium of the disgrace."—*Service Afloat and Ashore*, 390.

[2] Niles, lxxii, 214.

memorable twentieth of August. As a preliminary to the general attack upon the stronghold of Churubusco, it was deemed wise to reduce San Antonio; not that this fortress prevented an advance, as it could easily have been turned, now that it was deprived of the support of Contreras; but because it effectually closed the best road for the heavy ordnance composing the siege train. This task was speedily accomplished by General Worth,[1] supported by Cadwalader's Brigade of Pillow's Division, who then hastened forward along the San Antonio causeway, to rejoin the main army which had already begun its attack upon Churubusco.[2] This was to be the real battle of the day, to which the engagements of Contreras and San Antonio were merely the preludes. Here the entire American force was to face the entire Mexican force, and to win by virtue of superior skill and determination. Santa Anna had gathered behind the strong defenses of Churubusco, or within easy supporting distance of them, "the whole remaining forces of Mexico—some twenty-seven thousand men—cavalry, artillery, and infantry, collected from every quarter, . . . resolved to make a last and desperate stand; for, if beaten here, the feebler defenses at the gates of the city—four miles off—could not, as was well known to both armies, delay the victors an hour." The stakes were "the capital of an ancient empire,

[1] Scott's Report of August 28, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 306–315. The capture of San Antonio is described on p. 309.

[2] *Ibid.*, 310.

now of a great republic, or an early peace," as General Scott expresses it[1]; and the assailants were resolved to win, even with an army numbering less than nine thousand.[2]

Santa Anna's position was well calculated for defense, being surrounded by numerous stone walls pierced by embrasures, and presenting at least two strongly fortified points which must be carried by assault. The first of these was the Tête de Pont, or bridge-head, on the main causeway, standing at the entrance of the bridge over the Churubusco river. The second was the Convent Church,[3] San Pablo, some five hundred yards farther west against which General Twiggs had been actively engaged for over an hour before the arrival of Worth's detachment. General Shields had undertaken to turn the enemy's right flank, and secure a foothold upon the San Antonio road, behind the Tête de Pont.[4]

These movements had been set on foot by General Scott himself, who had advanced to Coyoacan

[1] Scott's Report of August 28, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 306–315.

[2] "At Contreras, Churubusco, etc., [August 20] we had but eight thousand, four hundred and ninety-seven men engaged after deducting the garrison of San Augustin, . . . the intermediate sick, and the dead."—Scott's Report of September 18, 1847. Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 375–386.

[3] Churubusco "presented, besides the fortified convent, a strong field-work (*tête de pont*) with regular bastions and curtains, at the head of a bridge over which the road passes from San Antonio to the capital." —Scott's Report of August 28, 1847.

[4] Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 400–401, for details of this movement. See also Scott's Report of August 28, 1847.

"by a cross road from the rear of San Antonio"[1]; but their success was later seen to depend upon the capture of the Tête de Pont which commanded both positions. For Worth, advancing by the main road from the captured post of San Antonio, this crucial position was the obvious point of attack; and thus, by chance rather than by any deliberate design, the fate of the day came to depend upon the conduct of his command.

In three divisions, he advanced his army. Colonel Garland's Brigade moved to the right of the road, so as to strike the enemy's line at an angle. Clarke's Brigade marched also on the right, but parallel to the road; while the Sixth Infantry was sent forward along the road itself, so as to strike the Tête de Pont squarely in front.[2] The fields through which Garland and Clarke advanced were filled with standing grain, too low to afford concealment to marching troops, but offering advantages to the Mexican riflemen who lay there firing upon our columns. "When the battle was over," writes Raphael Semmes,[3] "we counted one hundred dead bodies of our brave fellows lying in this cornfield, within the space of an acre."

The Sixth Infantry, on the main roadway, met a

[1] George Wilkins Kendall says that this movement emanated directly from Scott and was "happy in its conception and evinced rare strategic ability." It of course occupied Santa Anna's attention, and prevented him from throwing reinforcements into the Tête de Pont and the Convent Church while Pillow and Worth were advancing.—*War between the United States and Mexico*, 33.

[2] Movements described in Worth's Report of August 23, 1847.—Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, 315–322.

[3] *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 399.

deadly fire from the guns of the Tête de Pont and San Pablo, which shattered its ranks, causing it to fall back. Clarke's and Garland's Brigades, however, had driven the hidden riflemen from their concealment in the cornfield, and now stormed the works by a bayonet charge. The Mexicans wavered, and, in another moment, had given way, and were in full retreat toward the gates of Mexico.[1]

On the American left, about three hundred yards away, General Twiggs was still hammering at the fortifications of the convent, though suffering terrible losses from the artillery, and the sharpshooters perched upon the flat roof of the church. "The enemy from their elevated position," writes an officer,[2] "could readily see our men, who were unable to get a clear view from their position. Three of the pieces were manned by . . . a body of about one hundred who had deserted from the ranks of our army during the war. They were enrolled in two companies, commanded by a deserter [Thomas Riley], and were better uniformed and disciplined than the rest of the army." These men fought with a desperation born of the knowledge of the punishment which awaited them in case of surrender; but the fall of the Tête de Pont had sealed their fate. Captains Larkin Smith and Bomford turned the guns of this captured stronghold upon San Pablo; and Duncan's battery, which General Worth had kept in reserve, soon added its

[1] Scott's Report of August 28, 1847.

[2] Letter to the New York *Courier*, quoted in Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 266.

voice to the tumult. For twenty minutes San Pablo held out; then a white flag was raised in token of submission,[1] and General Twiggs sent forward Captain Alexander to receive its surrender.

Thus, for the fourth time upon this never-to-be-forgotten day, had the banners of the "Army of Invasion" supplanted those of the Mexican Republic; and still, on the causeway behind the captured Tête de Pont, the conflict was raging with undiminished fury. There General Shields, aided by Brigadier-General Franklin Pierce, was waging unequal battle with Santa Anna's heavy reserves.[2] Regiment after regiment had been sent against the Mexican defenses, only to be hurled back in disorder. General Pierce, who had been barely "able to keep the saddle" when the engagement began, fainted from exhaustion, and the effects of an injury received the previous day[3]; and the out-

[1] Worth's Report of August 23, 1847.

[2] The movement to gain the main road behind Churubusco and thus cut off that garrison's connections with the City of Mexico had been intrusted by Scott to General Pierce. Captain Robert E. Lee had conducted the expedition; and General Shields, with the New York and South Carolina Volunteers, had been ordered to follow and take command. Scott's Report of August 28, 1847.

[3] In a letter to his wife, dated August 26, 1847, Pierce gives a detailed and graphic account of this accident, which was caused by a fall from his horse. "In thirty minutes," he says, "I was able to walk with difficulty, and pressed forward under a fire that was far from agreeable." The injuries received in the fall, however, troubled him during the strenuous hours that followed; and the next day, while leading his brigade, in the pursuit of the flying Mexicans, he had come to a ditch, "impossible for my horse to . . . leap. I sprang from my saddle, without thinking of my injury, [and] moved on foot, at the head of my Brigade for 300 yards, when, turning suddenly upon my knee the cartilage of which had been seriously injured, I fainted and fell upon the bank in the direct

come of the battle became even more dubious. At this critical moment, General Shields ordered forward the Palmetto Regiment, and the New York volunteers, who advanced with unswerving determination in the face of terrible slaughter. As they opened fire at short range, the Mexican lines were seen to waver. Shields ordered a charge; and, with fixed bayonets, his men sprang forward. The ranks of the Mexicans gave way, and in panic they turned and dashed along the causeway leading to the city, trampling their dead and wounded, and mingling with the fugitives from the bridge and the convent-church. Behind them came the dreaded American dragoons, sabering as they went, and too intent to notice the guns at the city gate,[1] which were opening upon them a raking fire of grape. Only at the very gate did their impulsive captain, "Phil" Kearny, realize the danger and order a retreat, having paid the price of his gallant rashness by the loss of his left arm.[2]

Already, in the captured village of Churubusco, the "Army of Invasion" was celebrating the unprecedented victories of the day, "the Battle of the Valley of Mexico," consisting of five separate actions, in which, as Franklin Pierce tells us,[3]

range of a heavy fire of the enemy. That I escaped seems to me now almost like a miracle." Pierce MSS., Library of Congress.

[1] Garita of San Antonio Abad.—Kendall's *War between the United States and Mexico*, 32.

[2] Letter from William M. Sweeny of the Aztec Club.

[3] Franklin Pierce to his wife, dated August 26, 1847.—Pierce MSS., vol., 1838–1847, Library of Congress. General Scott's Report, of September 18, 1847, gives more exact figures; but they substantially agree with those of Pierce.

"with about nine thousand men we attacked over twenty-five thousand in position, upon ground of their own selection, admirably fortified. We took, during the twentieth, thirty-five pieces of artillery, an immense amount of ammunition, eight hundred mules and horses, took prisoners eight generals, any number of colonels, and two thousand men. The enemy's loss must have been very great in killed and wounded. It is believed not less than twenty-five hundred. Our troops buried five hundred Mexicans upon the field in the morning; and the battle of the afternoon was much more bloody. . . . Our loss too has been heavy."[1]

The exterior lines of Mexican defenses, Contreras, San Antonio, and Churubusco, were now garrisoned by American troops; and "we might, with but little additional loss," writes Scott,[2] "have occupied the Capital the same evening[3]: but Mr. Trist, Commissioner, etc., as well as myself, had been admonished by the best friends of peace—intelligent neutrals and some American residents—against precipitation . . . [and], remembering our mission to conquer a peace, the army very cheerfully sacrificed to patriotism, . . . the éclat that would have followed an entrance, sword in hand, into a great Capital."[4]

[1] Scott estimated his loss in the battles of August 19th and 20th as one thousand and fifty-two.—*Memoirs*, ii, 531.

[2] Report of August 28, 1847.

[3] Franklin Pierce, in describing this possibility to his wife, declares: "If we had marched into the city on the evening of the twentieth, peace in my judgment would have [been] postponed indefinitely." Letter dated August 23, 1847.—Pierce MSS., vol., 1838–1847, Library of Congress.

[4] In a letter to his wife, dated August 26, 1847, Franklin Pierce de-

Thus, encamped at the very gates of the City of Mexico, the victorious "Army of Invasion" awaited the result of the peaceful negotiations, which were opened by General Scott in a letter to Santa Anna declaring: "Too much blood has already been shed in this unnatural war between the two great republics of this continent. . . . Your Excellency knows that there is with this army a commissioner on the part of the United States invested with plenary powers. . . . In order to open the way for the two republics to enter into negotiations, I desire to execute, on reasonable terms, a short armistice. . . ."[1]

Santa Anna promptly accepted this generous proposal[2]; and a general armistice[3] was signed by the commissioners and ratified by the two commanding generals.[4] Trist then opened the peace negotiations; but, several days later, it was discovered that every effort was being made by Santa Anna to fortify the City of Mexico and the outer defenses of the Capital.[5] Santa Anna, wrote a Mexican to the correspondent of the New York

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clared: "We could easily have taken the city but General Scott was met with a proposition for an armistice."—Pierce MSS., Library of Congress.

[1] Text, Senate Documents, 1st Session, 30th Cong., vii, 52, p. 308.

[2] Text, Alcorta to Scott, August 21, 1847, *ibid.*

[3] Text, *ibid.*, 310–312.

That he was aiming only to gain time for strengthening his fortifications, is evident from a letter which he wrote to Don Manuel Rejon, on August 31st.—Text, Raphael Semmes's *Service Afloat and Ashore*, 415–416.

[4] Text of ratifications, *ibid.*, 312–313.

[5] Letter to Franklin Pierce, dated August 31, 1847.—Pierce MSS., Library of Congress,

Sun,[1] has "caused to be conveyed in every possible manner, so as not to excite suspicion, arms, munitions, and food to the fortress of Chapultepec. Our citizens have carried under their mantles, and on their mules, a great quantity of powder, balls, and provisions, without being once discovered, so great was the feeling of security and confidence among the Americans." Moreover, the demands made by Santa Anna in the peace negotiations themselves[2] showed that he was not really desirous of peace,[3] being such as he could scarcely have expected an army flushed with so many victories to accept. As soon as this became evident, General Scott sent him a curt note,[4] containing the following words: "Sir: The article 7th, as well as the 12th . . . of the armistice . . . have been repeatedly violated soon after the armistice was signed. . . . I now declare formally that if I do not receive complete satisfaction for all these charges before 12 o'clock to-morrow, I will consider the aforesaid armistice as terminated. . . ." This letter was dated September 6th; and on the following day, the "full satisfaction" not having been received, General Scott publicly declared his intention of resuming offensive operations. He then turned his

[1] Quoted in Mansfield's *Life of Scott*, 435.

[2] The details of the demands and the negotiations which followed appear in the documents printed in No. 52 of the Senate Documents, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., p. 313 *et seq.*

[3] On September 14, 1847, President Polk, after reading all the dispatches regarding the armistice, wrote in his Diary: "I fear the armistice was agreed to by the Mexican commander only to gain time to reorganize his defeated army for further resistance." Vol. iii, 172.

[4] Text, Senate Documents, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, p. 346.

attention to the problem of capturing the height of Chapultepec, whose guns completely commanded the causeways leading from the American camp at Tacubaya to the Belen and the San Cosmé gates, through which he planned to make his entrance into the Mexican Capital.

As the most practicable way of approach to this stronghold was found to be from the west, and as that approach was effectively guarded by Molino del Rey, it became necessary to capture this stronghold before proceeding against the height itself. Accordingly, General Worth, with thirty-one hundred men,[1] was dispatched with orders to destroy it, together with the powder magazine of the Casa de Mata, which lay about four hundred yards farther west, and then to return to the headquarters at Tacubaya. Had General Scott known the actual strength of these two positions, he would scarcely have ventured to issue such an order to so small a band of men. Fully conscious of the importance of these posts, Santa Anna had not only garrisoned them strongly, but had erected a field battery midway between them, upon either side of which he had drawn up the ten thousand Mexican infantry which he commanded in person. His resistance was desperate; and in no battle during the entire war did the Mexican courage and determination show to better advantage. But the advance of the "Army of Invasion" was to be checked neither by numbers nor yet by gallantry.

[1] Mansfield's *Mexican War*, 285, gives a table showing the troops engaged in this expedition.

At the center of the Mexican line which he deemed the weakest point, Worth hurled an assaulting party of five hundred picked men, supported by Huger's battery. Driving the Mexican infantry and artillery before them, they captured the field battery, and turned its guns upon the enemy; but a terrific musketry fire, caused them to falter; and the enemy, again advancing, recovered their position. The timely arrival of Captain E. Kirby Smith, with a portion of Cadwalader's Brigade, however, forced the Mexicans back a second time; and the Americans occupied the central battery. The two wings of the Mexican army, Molino del Rey and Casa de Mata, thus isolated, were captured in succession, but only after a conflict the most bloody in the annals of the war. Casa de Mata was then blown up; the munitions of war found in Molino del Rey were destroyed; and General Worth marched back to headquarters, with one fourth of his gallant detachment missing from the ranks.[1]

And now the day approached upon which "the Army of Invasion" was to win its final and crowning glory. By the twelfth of September, General Scott had completed his arrangements for storming Chapultepec, and advancing his army to the western gates. A masked movement against the southern gates had been arranged, in order to divert the force of the enemy. Quitman, Pillow, and Twiggs,

[1] The full details of this engagement are given in Worth's Report of September 10, 1847.—Text, Senate Documents, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., i, pp. 361–373, with tables of troops engaged and casualties.

with Riley's Brigade and two batteries, had made their appearance there at daybreak on the 11th; thus drawing to that point all of the available reinforcements of the enemy.[1] Upon the succeeding night, however, the Divisions of Pillow and Quitman, to whom had been assigned the leading parts in the projected operations against Chapultepec, hastened back to Tacubaya, leaving Twiggs to continue the deception at the south. Four heavy batteries were then erected, so as to command the heights of Chapultepec[2]; and from those during the whole of the following day, a continuous fire was directed against the stronghold, in order to reduce it to a condition in which it could be more easily taken by assault.[3]

By the morning of the 13th, this object had been sufficiently accomplished; and at 8 A.M. General Scott informed Generals Pillow and Quitman that the moment for attack had arrived. According to orders previously issued, General Pillow advanced at once to the western slope of Chapultepec; while Quitman marched against its southeastern side; and the reserve, under General Worth, skirted the hill and came out upon the road on the north, there to assist the assault, or cut off the retreat of the enemy, as occasion should offer.

General Pillow's advance on the western side lay through an open grove filled with sharpshooters. These were promptly dislodged; and the assaulting column pressed on to the foot of the rocky acclivity.

[1] Scott's official dispatch of September 18, 1847.—Text, Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 508–534. [2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*

Here the gallant commander, General Pillow, was disabled by a painful wound; and the command devolved upon General Cadwalader, who led his men forward without a moment's delay.

"The advance of our brave men," says Scott's official report,[1] ". . . though necessarily slow, was unwavering, over rocks, chasms, and mines, and under the hottest fire of cannon and musketry." A strong redoubt, halfway up the broken acclivity, was now reached and taken, the shouts that followed its capture announcing, to the castle above, the fate that impended. From shelter to shelter the enemy were driven, the retreat allowing no time to fire a single one of the mines by which the approach to the castle was guarded, the few who were hardy enough to attempt it being shot down with the lighted matches in their hands. "At length," says General Scott's report, "the ditch and wall of the main work were reached; the scaling-ladders were brought up and planted; . . . a lodgment was soon made; streams of heroes followed; all opposition was overcome, and several of our regimental colors flung out from the upper wall, amidst long-continued shouts and cheers, which sent dismay into the Capital. No scene could have been more animating or glorious."[2]

For the defeated garrison of Chapultepec escape was difficult. The two great causeways which

[1] Scott's official dispatch of September 18, 1847.—Text, Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 508–534.

[2] *Ibid.*, 515. "Our whole operating force," says Scott, in the same report, ". . . was but seven thousand one hundred and eighty."

stretched toward the Capital were both beset with danger. General Quitman, with his detachment which had vigorously assaulted the southeastern side of the fortress during the siege, was ready to receive the fugitives making for the Belen gate; while, at the entrance to the causeway leading northward, Worth's Division awaited eagerly the arrival of those heading for the San Cosmé gate.

To General Scott, as he stood upon the top of the captured Chapultepec, the whole frantic route was revealed like a great panorama:[1] two long lines of gaily costumed Mexican fugitives, rushing along the ever diverging causeways, beset by their pursuers, and protected as well as possible by the fire from the batteries and garrisons guarding the two gates of the city. To the northward, Worth pressed on to the first battery protecting the causeway. Carrying this, he cautiously advanced to the second, which was also taken by storm. At this point, General Scott joined him, and ordered a halt.[2] Between them and the heart of the city now lay only the weak defenses of the San Cosmé gate; but, as it was already eight o'clock in the evening, and as "that barrier it was known could not, by daylight, resist our siege guns thirty minutes,"[3] Scott thought best to postpone the attack until the following morning.

To the southward, however, an entrance had

[1] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 522. [2] *Ibid.*, 523.

[3] This clause does not appear in Scott's official dispatch, as given in his *Memoirs*. [See ii, 524.] It does, however, appear in the text as given on page 314 of Mansfield's *Mexican War*.

already been effected. General Quitman, in his hot pursuit of the flying Mexicans, had led his men quite past the intermediate batteries guarding the Belen gate, and established his troops within the walls of the city,[1] where they lay waiting for the dawn, to complete the victory by carrying the citadel, whose guns now alone disputed their pathway to the Grand Plaza.

But there was no more fighting to be done. The "Napoleon of the West" had played his last card and lost. Silently, amid the shadows of that summer night, he mustered the shattered remnant of his army, and passed out of the northwestern gate of his Capital, a ruler without a country, soon to become an exile from his land.[2]

At dawn, a deputation of the City Council waited upon General Scott, bearing the news that the Federal government and the army had fled, and asking terms of capitulation. "I promptly replied," writes Scott,[3] "that I would sign no capitulation; that the city had been virtually in our possession from the time of the lodgments effected by Worth and Quitman the day before, . . . and that the American army should come under no terms not self-imposed."

At the termination of this interview, Quitman

[1] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 526.

[2] About a month later, President Polk entered in his diary the grateful news that "Santa Anna had resigned the Presidency, and that Pena y Pena who had succeeded him had convened the Mexican Congress to meet at Queretaro," a town about one hundred and fifty miles northwest of the City of Mexico.—Polk's *Diary*, iii, 194.

[3] Official dispatch of September 18, 1847, written in the National Palace of Mexico, *Memoirs*, ii, 527.

proceeded to the Grand Plaza, planted guards, and hoisted the colors of the United States on the National Palace. To this glorious conquest, says Scott,[1] "all had contributed . . . the killed, the wounded and the fit for duty—at Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo, Contreras, San Antonio, Churubusco, . . . the Molinos del Rey and Chapultepec—as much as those who fought at the gates of Belen and San Cosmé. . . . The capital . . . was not taken by any one or two corps, but by the talent, the science, the gallantry, the prowess of this entire army."

[1] Scott's *Memoirs*, ii, 528. I have taken the liberty of reversing the order of one sentence.

CHAPTER XII

THE PEACE OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

SIGNED FEBRUARY 2, 1848

THE military operations of the war with Mexico being now practically at an end, the messenger of peace, Nicholas Philip Trist, began to occupy the center of the stage. His intimate counselor was General Winfield Scott with whom his relations had so lately been bitterly hostile; and together they were steadily pushing plans for a peace, when Trist received a letter from the Secretary of State[1] directing him to return to the United States. The reason for his recall, says Polk,[2] is the fact that "his remaining longer with the army could not, probably, accomplish the objects of his mission, and . . . might, and probably would, impress the Mexican Government with the belief that the United States were so anxious for peace that they would ultimately conclude one upon the Mexican terms. Mexico must now sue for peace, and when she does we will hear her propositions."

[1] Text, Moore's *Buchanan*, vii, 425. See also, Polk's *Diary*, iii, 185 and 266.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, iii, 186. The recall was decided upon on October 4, 1847, *ibid.*, 185.

It may be fairly doubted whether this apparently frank avowal embodies all of the important facts which caused the recall of Trist. As the enemy of Scott, he had enjoyed the confidence of the President; but the intimacy which had of late grown up between the two had, to Polk's mind, a decidedly sinister aspect. Distrusting Scott as he did, Polk not unnaturally suspected that his alliance with the American envoy meant the hatching of some plot to defeat the ends of the administration,[1] and to give the credit of accomplishing a final and honorable peace to the Whigs and their ambitious sympathizer, General Winfield Scott. Rumors, furthermore, had reached the President which appeared to add color to these suspicions. He had been informed that, before the army had entered the Capital, Trist had promised "to pay Santa Anna a million of dollars as secret money if he would agree to make a treaty of peace."[2]

Under ordinary circumstances, such a letter of recall as Trist had received would have ended his diplomatic activities; but, in view of the evident willingness of Mexico to enter into peace negotia-

[1] On February 7, 1848, Polk recorded in his diary his conviction "that there is a conspiracy between Scott and Trist to put the Government at defiance and make a treaty of some sort.—"*Diary*, iii, 330. See, also, *ibid.*, 267.

[2] This information was given to the Cabinet by Polk on December 11, 1847.—*Diary*, iii, 245. In confirmation, Polk showed a letter from General Pillow, dated October 28, 1847. (*Ibid.*, iii, 251.) A few days later, his diary records the fact that General Shields had just reached Washington, and had utterly denied this story of an attempt to bribe Santa Anna.—*Ibid.*, iii, 263.

tions upon the basis of Trist's instructions,[1] the temptation to disregard his letter of recall was strong.[2] Both he and Scott were confident that the American people were eager for peace, and would hail with delight a treaty which should honorably secure it. Trist, therefore, decided to pursue the object of his mission, trusting to the protection of popular approval in case of success.

Polk's first intimation of this came in a letter from Colonel Wilson,[3] stating that he had heard "that negotiations had been renewed by Mr. Trist with the Mexican commissioners recently appointed." Confirmation of this astonishing statement arrived the next day, in a letter from Trist to his wife,[4] containing a postscript which she was directed to show confidentially to Mr. Buchanan. It declared, "that on the day he wrote, at twelve o'clock, he would open negotiations with the Mexican commissioners and would offer to agree to a treaty with them upon the ultimatum which he was authorized to propose in April last, taking the parallel of 32° from the Rio Grande

[1] Text of instructions, Senate Documents, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, pp. 81–89. This same volume contains the entire correspondence between Trist and the Secretary of State, as well as that between Trist and the Mexican commissioners.

[2] On December 4, 1847, Trist wrote to a friend that, among his reasons for not obeying his recall, was the fact that "if the present opportunity be not seized, . . . all chance of making a treaty at all will be lost, . . . probably forever."—Text, *ibid.*, p. 101. In his letter of December 6, 1847, announcing the conclusion of a treaty, he uses the same words.—*Ibid.*, 237. See, also, Polk's *Diary*, ii, 269.

[3] Dated Vera Cruz, December 16, 1847.—Polk's *Diary*, iii, 283.

[4] Dated December 4, 1847.—Polk's *Diary*, iii, 286.

as the boundary, and that he would offer to pay them $15,000,000 in addition to the $3,000,000 appropriated by Congress at the last session for this cession of territory."[1]

At no time, during his four years of almost constant annoyance and unrest, was the patience of James K. Polk so sorely tried as by this open defiance of his authority. He had scarcely ceased to gasp in astonishment at the knowledge that anyone could be so bold as thus openly to defy him, when he received a dispatch from Trist himself,[2] which he not unjustly describes in his diary as "the most extraordinary document I have ever heard from a diplomatic representative." In it Trist calmly announces that he has re-opened negotiations with the enemy, and has resolved to conclude a treaty of peace with them. He blandly admits that he is acting without authority and in violation of the positive orders recalling him, and his very frankness made his defiance the more insulting. "I told Mr. Buchanan," wrote Polk, "that the paper was so . . . contemptibly base that it required no lengthy answer, but that it

[1] This line gave to the United States New Mexico and Upper California. The name, New Mexico, then designated only a part of the present territory of that name, all of Arizona, except the southern part, which we purchased in 1853, parts of what are now Colorado and Wyoming, and practically the entire districts now included in Utah and Nevada. See Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America*, vol. vii, 552, for map showing the territory acquired. For supplemental instructions on this point, see Senate Documents, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, pp. 117–118.

[2] Dated December 6, 1847, Polk's *Diary*, January 15, 1848, iii, 300. The full text of this remarkable letter appears in No. 52 of the Senate Documents, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, pp. 231–266.

did require a short, but stern and decided rebuke, and directed him to prepare such a reply."[1]

While the passion was on him, Polk also ordered the Secretary to write to General Butler, now commanding in Mexico, "directing him, if Mr. Trist was still with the Headquarters of the army, to order him off, and to inform the authorities of Mexico that he had no authority to treat."[2] Buchanan delayed the execution of this command, and, about a week later, called at the White House with the suggestion, that to order Trist to be sent out of Mexico would be proper if the President had made up his mind to reject the treaty, if one should be offered.[3] It was one thing to punish Trist, but it was quite another to reject a treaty of peace made upon terms which the President himself had drawn, and which would certainly be hailed with delight by a nation weary of war.

But indignation with Trist was too strong for caution, and the order for his expulsion was sent.[4] Before it arrived, however, Trist had met the Mexican commissioners, Señors Couto, Cuevas, and Atristain at the city of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and had signed a treaty of peace.[5] "Among the points which came under discussion," wrote

[1] Polk's *Diary*, January 15, 1848, iii, 301.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, January 24, 1848, iii, 311.

[4] For details of discussions upon the question, See *Ibid.*, iii, 313–317.

[5] Signed February 2, 1848. On January 25th, Trist wrote that the Mexican commissioners had strongly insisted upon a provision "for the submission of all future differences to arbitration."—Senate Documents, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, p. 289.

Trist,[1] "was the exclusion of slavery from all territory which should pass from Mexico[2] . . . I concluded by assuring them . . . that if it were in their power to offer me the whole territory described in our project, increased tenfold in value, and in addition . . . covered a foot thick all over with pure gold, upon the single condition that slavery be excluded therefrom, I could not entertain the offer for a moment, nor think even of communicating it to Washington."

Some weeks later, the Secretary of State received a curious, unsigned, cipher dispatch from Charleston, South Carolina, announcing that Trist had reached that city, and was on his way to Washington, bearing the text of a treaty of peace which had been duly signed and ratified by Mexico.[3] While he and the President were still debating the precise meaning of the cipher, a messenger arrived from Mexico with an official copy of the treaty.[4] After two days of deliberation and consultation with his official family,[5] Polk decided

[1] Dispatch No. 15.—Text, Senate Documents, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, p. 199.

[2] The principle of the Wilmot Proviso.

[3] Polk's *Diary*, iii, 344.

[4] "The same messenger," wrote Polk on February 19, 1848 [*Diary*, iii, 346], "who brought Trist's treaty brought dispatches from Scott. One point in them relates to the alleged meeting of general officers at Puebla in July last, relative to the paying of money to Santa Anna to induce him to make a treaty." General Scott's answer is evasive, and leaves the irresistible inference that such a transaction took place, and that it will not bear the light. Whatever it was it was wholly unauthorized, and probably led to the fatal armistice in August, which enabled the enemy to re-inforce himself."—*Ibid.*, vol. iii, 346.

[5] For details of the discussions in the Cabinet, see *Ibid.*, iii, 347–350. Buchanan and Walker urged the rejection of the treaty.

to refer the document to the Senate, basing this decision upon the grounds:

I. That the treaty conformed to Trist's instructions "on the main question of limits and boundary."

II. That it was doubtful whether more territory could be obtained from Mexico by new negotiations.

III. That "if I were now to reject a treaty made upon my own terms, as authorized in April last, . . . the probability is that Congress would not grant either men or money to prosecute the war."[1]

Thus, he argues, we might "lose the two provinces of New Mexico and Upper California, which were ceded to the United States by this treaty," and, should the Whigs succeed to the control of our government, "the country would lose all the advantages secured by this treaty."

On February 21, 1848, the Thirtieth Congress of the United States displayed a scene of unusual

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Mason, Marcy, Johnson, and Clifford advised that it be sent to the Senate. To the surprise of the entire Cabinet, Buchanan based his advice to reject the treaty, upon the ground that "he wanted more territory." Polk reminded him that "up to last April" he had opposed the idea of "acquiring any Mexican territory." Polk's explanation of this change is characteristically suspicious. "He earnestly wishes me to send the treaty to the Senate, against his advice," he wrote in his *Diary* [February 20, 1848, iii, 350], as he "does not wish to incur the displeasure of those who favor the conquest of all Mexico."

[1] This fear was not without foundation. The hostility of the Whig leaders had increased as the war had approached conclusion. Webster had even gone so far as to suggest the idea of impeaching the President, "because of my course in reference to the war."—Polk's *Diary*, vol. iii, 273.

interest. For some days, rumors of peace and of a treaty with Mexico had formed the chief subject of conversation in the American Capital. It was a matter of common knowledge that Trist had been recalled; and no one knew of the appointment of a peace commissioner to take his place; yet, rumor said that Trist had negotiated a treaty with Mexico, and that this treaty, now in the President's hands, was soon to be submitted to the Senate. Since General Scott's triumphal entry into the Mexican Capital, there had grown up in the United States a very widespread desire that "the banners now floating from the City of Mexico shall never be withdrawn." Trist himself seems to have been among the first officially to suggest the idea.[1] On October 25, 1847, he had written to Buchanan, "That it (Mexico) is to become a part of the United States, and this at no remote period, is certain. Why not at once, to-day, instead of ten or twenty years hence? You are here already; why not stay? You have certainly done mischief, and placed the country in far worse condition than before: why not do good, and let this worse condition prove but a step to her regeneration, and to the peace and quiet which it depends entirely upon yourselves at once to give her? . . . I become more and more fully satisfied every day that a force of from twenty-five to thirty thousand

[1] The idea of conquering and absorbing the whole of Mexico had evidently taken an early hold in South Carolina. In May, 1846, Calhoun had received a letter from James Gregorie, of Charleston, declaring that there was a conspiracy, widespread in the Southwest, to conquer the whole of Mexico.—Text, *Letters of John C. Calhoun*, 1084.

men would be fully sufficient; and that the expense could, without difficulty, be met by the revenue produced from the ordinary sources."[1] It was the cry of American Imperialism, a cry to which we have become accustomed during recent years, but which, in 1848, had the added flavor of novelty. Since the re-assembling of Congress in December, 1847, it had been steadily gaining strength[2]; and Robert J. Walker, Secretary of the Treasury, had for some time been its open advocate[3]; while Buchanan,[4] in proposing a paragraph for Polk's opening message,[5] had presented the high sounding and suspiciously devout phrase, "We must fulfill that destiny which Providence may have in store for both countries," which meant, when translated into the terms of ordinary speech, "absorb the entire republic of Mexico."[6] The President had rejected this phrase, so redolent of submission to

[1] Senate Documents, 1st Sess., 30 Cong., vii, 52, p. 211.

[2] In a speech, on March 16 and 17, 1848, Calhoun declared that, at the opening of Congress in December, 1847, there was a "large party, scattered over every portion of the country, in favor of conquering the whole of Mexico." Calhoun's *Works*, iv, 429.

[3] Niles, lxxiii, 113.

[4] "Buchanan," wrote Polk on November 9, 1847 (*Diary*, vol., iii, 217), "seems to have changed his views. . . . Until recently he had expressed his opinion against acquiring any other territory than California and New Mexico. . . . [Now] he would favor the policy of acquiring in addition . . . the Province of Tamaulipas and the country east of the Sierra Madre mountains. . . . Since he has considered himself as a candidate for the Presidency, it is probable he looks at the subject with different considerations in view."

[5] Polk's *Diary*, vol., iii, 226.

[6] For a critical examination of the "Whole of Mexico" movement, see "The United States and Mexico, 1847–1848," by Edward G. Bourne, *American Historical Review*, April, 1900. See also Niles, lxxiii, 334 *et seq.*

divine guidance; and the message, in its final form, had made it perfectly clear that, though determined to secure New Mexico and California, Polk would not countenance the "Whole of Mexico" idea.[1]

In Congress, since the opening of the final session, the "Whole of Mexico" partisans had been doing their best to secure a vote in favor of their policy. Numerous resolutions had been offered, and their sponsors were by no means confined to the pro-slavery members. It was a movement of national character; and its strongest opponent was none other than John C. Calhoun. Just before the capture of the Mexican capital, he had written,[2] "If we succeed in conquering the whole, . . . what can we do with it without ruin to our institutions?" And now, on December 15, 1847, he presented to the Senate a set of resolutions[3] declaring, "To conquer Mexico, and to hold it, either as a province or to incorporate it in the Union, would be inconsistent with the avowed object for which the war has been prosecuted; a departure from the settled policy of the Government; in conflict with its character and genius; and, in the end, subversive of our free and popular institutions." In defense of these resolutions, Calhoun delivered a carefully prepared speech,[4] in which he asked the question, so often asked since his day, "How can we make a free govern-

[1] Niles, lxxiii, 230.

[2] Calhoun to Clemson, October 24, 1847. Jameson's *Correspondence of John C. Calhoun*, 737.

[3] Text, Calhoun's *Works*, iv, 396.

[4] *Ibid.*, 396–424.

ment in Mexico? Where are the materials? . . . Where is the intelligence in Mexico for the construction and preservation of such a government?" And then, answering his own interrogation, he declared, "If it were possible to establish such a government, it could not stand without the protection of our army. It would fall as soon as it is withdrawn."

Such were the views of the man who gloried in the delusion that he had been the chief agent in procuring the "reannexation" of Texas. To his mind, intent upon serving the interests of the slave-holding States, the possession of slave-holding Texas was a very different idea from the possession of Mexico; for, as Waddy Thompson had written him, it was not more certain that Canada would be free soil if annexed to the United States, "than that these Mexican States will."[1] This fact was not hidden from the anti-slavery sections of the country, and the "Whole of Mexico" movement steadily gained strength in those regions and in Europe. More than a year before, George Bancroft had written from London, "People are beginning to say that it would be a blessing to the world if the United States would assume the tutelage of Mexico."[2]

Such, then, was the condition of affairs, when

[1] December 18, 1847, Jameson's *Correspondence of John C. Calhoun*, 1152. [2] Curtis's *Life of James Buchanan*, i, 576. Alexander von Humboldt later predicted, "Die Vereinigten Staaten werden ganz Mexico an sich reissen und dann selbst zerfallen." Roscher's *Kolonien, Kolonialpolitik und Auswanderung*, 177. Quoted, Bourne's *Essays in Historical Criticism*, 237, note.

the two Houses of Congress were called to order on the twenty-first of February. The venerable ex-President, John Quincy Adams, had taken his seat, and received, as usual, the respectful greetings of free-soilers and slave-holders alike; for "Old Man Eloquent," as he had come to be called, had long ago established his right to courteous treatment from men of all parties. For him the question of the coming treaty had a personal as well as a political meaning, being the culmination of the Texas question, over which he had fought his fiercest battles with Andrew Jackson. The House had just passed a resolution thanking Generals Twiggs, Worth, Quitman, Pillow, Shields, Pierce, Cadwalader, and Smith for their gallant services during the war with Mexico, and voting a gold medal to each. Mr. Adams had cast his vote in an unusually emphatic voice; and the Speaker had risen to put another question, when he was interrupted by the cry, "Mr. Adams is dying." The venerable statesman had attempted to rise to address the Chair, and had been suddenly prostrated by a stroke of paralysis. He lay, almost unconscious, across the arm of his chair, fallen, like the great Chatham, at his post of duty. The House instantly adjourned; and the hero of so many forensic battles was borne, unconscious, to the Speaker's room. There, towards nightfall, he uttered his farewell: "This is the last of earth. I am content,"[1] and, on the evening of February 23,

[1] Further details, William H. Seward's *Life of John Quincy Adams*, 333–337, and Polk's *Diary*, iii, 356.

1848, his gallant spirit departed, leaving a nation in mourning.

When the President's Secretary had entered the Senate Chamber at noon of February 22, bearing the eagerly expected treaty of peace, he had found it empty. The Senate had adjourned, as a mark of respect for the dying Statesman,[1] and it was not until the following day that the treaty, with the accompanying message, was formally delivered.[2] The Senate then went into executive session to consider it; and, for over two weeks, the battle raged between the "Whole of Mexico" leaders, the followers of Webster,[3] who opposed the acquisition of any territory beyond the Rio Grande, and the supporters of the President, who urged the ratification of the treaty as it stood. Polk used every legitimate means to insure its adoption. "If the Treaty in its present form is ratified," he wrote,[4] "there will be added to the United States an immense empire the value of which, twenty years hence, it would be difficult to calculate; and yet Democratic and Whig Senators disregard this, and act solely with a view to the elevation of themselves or their favorites to the Presidential office."

By the beginning of March, the tide had begun to turn in favor of the Treaty; and, on the tenth of that month, Mr. Dickens, the Secretary of the

[1] Polk's *Diary*, iii, 351. [2] *Ibid.*, 352.

[3] On February 28, Webster moved that the President be advised to send Commissioners to Mexico to negotiate a treaty. Senate Documents 1st Sess., 30 Cong., vii, 52, p. 56.

[4] *Diary*, February 28, 1848, iii, 366.

Senate, brought to the President the official notice of its ratification.[1] As, however, a few amendments had been made during the deliberations of the Senate, it was necessary again to submit it to Mexico for final ratification; and a commission, composed of Ambrose H. Sevier of Arkansas, and Robert M. Walsh of Pennsylvania, was appointed for this mission.[2] They reached Mexico, on April 11, and for a time found it impossible to secure recognition by the Mexican authorities, who were again facing a condition bordering on revolution. On April 18, Sevier sent a dispatch informing the President of these facts, and adding, " the ratification . . . may be regarded as doubtful." A few days later, news was received that the Mexican Congress had been dispersed, and the existing government overthrown, which seemed to sound the death-knell of all Polk's hopes for the success of his treaty. Finally, however, on June 7, a dispatch from Sevier announced that the Mexican Chamber of Deputies had ratified, and that the Senate would probably do so within a few days[3]; and, shortly afterward, a final message declared

[1] "38 ayes to 14 nays, four Senators not voting." Polk's *Diary*, iii, 377. "The desire for peace, and not the approbation of its terms, induces the Senate to yield its consent," wrote Calhoun to Thomas G. Clemson, March 7, 1848. Jameson's *Correspondence of John C. Calhoun*, 746.

[2] Polk's *Diary*, iii, 382 *et seq.* A sudden illness prevented the prompt departure of Sevier; and the Attorney-General, Nathan Clifford, was sent in his place. [*Ibid.*, 389–391.] Sevier however, recovered in time to join the Commission, and take part in the negotiations leading to the final ratification. [*Ibid.*, 398–447.]

[3] Polk's *Diary*, June 8, 1848, iii, 485. The dispatch was dated May 21, 1848.

that the process was complete, the exchange of ratifications having taken place on May 30, 1848.[1]

The bearer of this dispatch also brought the news, that part of the Army had started for Vera Cruz, to embark for the United States; which meant that the war was over, and that James K. Polk had succeeded, not only in conquering a peace and in securing California and New Mexico; but in preventing the American Nation from absorbing "the whole of Mexico."

[1] Polk's *Diary*, June 22, 1848, iii, 498.

Full text of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, *Treaties and Conventions Concluded between the United States and Other Powers since July 4, 1776*, Washington, 1889, pp. 681–693.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW WEST

1848–1853

SHORTLY before the conclusion of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Daniel Webster declared in a speech at Springfield, Massachusetts[1]: "Peace may soon come. I hope to hear it before the dawn of another morning. But I cannot conceal from myself that peace may bring with it a crisis more dangerous than war." And, indeed, it required no Webster to see that the conflict was not yet over. From a military point of view, the serious problems had disappeared, when Santa Anna and his disorganized legions had abandoned the capital to its fate; but, from the point of view of American politics, the "crisis more dangerous than war" was still to be reckoned with. By the treaty of peace, the United States had acquired a vast territory, thereby bringing again under debate the question of slavery in the territories, which the Missouri Compromise had temporarily solved.

That slavery was legal in the States which chose

[1] September 29, 1847. *Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster.* (National edition), xiii, 361.

to allow it was beyond reasonable controversy, for this the Constitution clearly provided. It was also undeniably true that slavery was illegal in the regions north of the Ohio, as the Ordinance of 1787 had so declared, which Ordinance had been reaffirmed by Congress after the adoption of the Federal Constitution.[1] This latter fact would appear to have placed beyond dispute the right of Congress to control national territory with respect to slavery; for if Congress could exclude slavery from a territory, by the same power it could admit slavery into a territory; and, when the territory south of the Ohio had been ceded, Congress had made use of this power to legalize slavery in that region.[2] Thus Congress had both excluded and authorized slavery in national territory before the days of the Missouri Compromise of 1820. In that Compromise, by positive enactment and by implication, it did both at one time. It specifically declared slavery forever excluded from that portion of the Louisiana Purchase north of 36° 30′, Missouri alone excepted; and, by implication, it authorized slavery in the part lying south of that line. During the long series of debates which took place while this Compromise was pending, few, even of the pro-slavery men, hinted that Congress

[1] See Max Farrand's *Legislation of Congress for the Government of the Organized Territories of the United States.* Appendix B. (1); also *ibid.*, 14.

[2] In North Carolina's act of cession, section four, it was stipulated: "That no regulations made or to be made by Congress shall tend to emancipate slaves." This, being accepted by Congress, was in effect legalizing slavery in the territory. *Ibid.*, 17, and Appendix B. 3.

had no power to prohibit slavery in the territories. This being the generally accepted view, it was a mistake to allow the line 36° 30′ to be fixed by compromise. It should have been established by the exercise of the power of Congress.[1] In admitting Texas to the Union, Congress made use of its power in precisely this way, the joint resolution of annexation declaring that: "Such States as may be formed out of that portion of said territory lying south of 36° 30′ . . . shall be admitted into the Union with or without slavery as the people of each State asking admission may desire; and in such State or States as shall be formed out of said territory north of the Missouri Compromise line, slavery or involuntary servitude (except for crime) shall be prohibited."[2]

At the opening of the Mexican War, therefore, the principle of territorial government, long established and operative in the United States, was that Congress was able, of its own motion, either to prohibit or to allow slavery in any of the territorial possessions of the United States.[3] On August 8, 1846,[4] President Polk asked Congress for an

[1] See Johnston's *American Political History* (Woodburn edition), ii, 83.

[2] See Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 608. Here Polk speaks of the line 36° 30′ as "the Missouri and Texas Compromise line."

[3] The Constitution itself definitely conferred this right upon Congress. In Article iv, Section 3, Clause 2, it declares: "The Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States."

[4] Richardson's *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, iv, 459–460. See also Cong. Globe, 1st Sess., 29th Cong., 1211.

appropriation of two million dollars, "to be placed at the disposal of the Executive" to enable him "to pay a fair equivalent for any concessions which may be made by Mexico." Representative McKay at once presented a bill for carrying into effect the President's recommendation,[1] which meant, as every one knew, the purchase of Mexican territory outside of Texas which had already been annexed. The Whigs, both Northern and Southern, opposed the acquisition of more territory, for fear of re-opening the slavery question, which their party dared not face, owing to the division of opinion within its ranks. Most of the Northern Democrats, on the other hand, were eager for Mexican land, though determined that, when secured, it should be free-soil[2]; and it was to express this idea that David Wilmot, a Democratic Representative from Pennsylvania, presented the amendment to the two-million-dollar appropriation bill, which is now famous under the name of the Wilmot Proviso.[3] It provided that, "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever exist in any part of said territory, except for crime, whereof the party shall first be duly convicted."[4] There was little opposition in the House, the amendment passing, and the amended bill being adopted, the

[1] Text, Cong. Globe, 1st Sess., 29th Cong., 1211. The resolution was re-written after some debate. Text of the new resolutions, *ibid.*, 1217.

[2] For details of the debate, see *ibid.*, 1211 *et seq.*

[3] The amendment was drafted by Jacob Brinkerhoff, a Democratic Representative from Ohio; but it was introduced by Wilmot, as his relations with the Polk Administration were more friendly than those of Brinkerhoff. See Von Holst *Const. Hist. of the U. S.*, iii, 287, note.

[4] Text, Cong. Globe, 1st Sess., 29th Cong., 1217.

very day it was introduced.[1] Two days later the Senate took it up, and it was discussed until the end of the session, when it died.[2]

During the second session of this same Congress, another bill was passed by the House, providing that three million dollars be placed at the disposal of the President,[3] to be used for a similar purpose. The Wilmot Proviso was attached to it also; but the bill failed to pass the Senate.[4] The idea embodied in the Proviso, however, would not die. "It may be," roared Chase, "you will succeed in burying the ordinance of freedom. But the people will write upon its tomb, 'I will rise again.' "[5] And it was even so; for around this idea the long conflict for the extension of slavery was to gather, causing the "crisis more dangerous than war," which Webster had predicted.

After peace had been proclaimed, it was found that the friends of free territory, under the spur of the Abolitionists, had become much more active and less disposed than formerly to make concessions. The men who had vainly supported the Wilmot Proviso now contended that the acquired territory was already free from slavery. With the exception of Texas, they declared, all the domain of Mexico was freed from slavery by the laws of Mexico; and the law of nations provides

[1] Cong. Globe, 1st Sess., 29th Cong., 1218.

[2] *Ibid.*, 1220 *et seq.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 2d Sess., 29th Cong., 424–425.

[4] For the debate in the Senate, lasting from February 16th to March 1st, and occupying a part of each day, see *ibid.*, 428–556.

[5] Carl Schurz's *Life of Henry Clay*, ii, 344.

that the laws of conquered countries remain in force, until changed by the conqueror.[1] Therefore, California, New Mexico, and all other territory acquired by the terms of the peace are now free from the pollution of slavery; and the question is whether the United States is ready to restore slavery by positive enactment.[2]

This argument, John C. Calhoun stood ready to answer.[3] As soon as this territory was ceded to the United States, he said, the authority of Mexico ceased, and that of the United States and her Constitution took its place. All laws not consistent with her Constitution at once became void.[4] The law excluding slavery is contrary to that Constitution which recognizes the right of property in slaves. Therefore, the Mexican anti-slavery laws are void; and slavery has a right to exist in the newly acquired territory. Neither Congress, nor

[1] For a discussion of this law, see John Bassett Moore's *International Law Digest*, i, 290.

[2] See, Address adopted by the New York Legislature, given in Tilden's *Works* (Bigelow edition) ii, 542–543.

During the negotiations leading to the peace of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the Mexican Commissioners had urged a clause prohibiting the introduction of slavery in the territory to be ceded to the United States. Trist had, however, rejected the idea declaring "that the bare mention of the subject in any treaty to which the United States were a party was an absolute impossibility."—Trist's Dispatch, No. 15. Text, Senate Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, 52, p. 199.

[3] His views on the question, "Does the Constitution extend to the territories," appear in vol. iv, pp. 535–536 of his works.

[4] "The idea that . . . the Constitution of the United States spread itself over the acquired Territory, and carried along with it the institution of slavery," said Clay, in his speech on the Compromise resolutions of 1850, ". . . is irreconcilable with any comprehension or reason that I possess."—Clay's *Works* (Colton, Reed, McKinley edition), iii, 308.

the inhabitants, nor the territorial legislatures has a right to exclude it.

While this contention was in progress, a new Oregon question arose which appeared to the Southern leaders to offer a good opportunity for securing a guaranty of at least "equal rights" in territory acquired from Mexico. On May 28, 1848, President Polk sent a special message to the two houses of Congress,[1] together with a memorial from Oregon, urging that laws be promptly passed establishing a territorial government for that region. He reminded Congress that, as early as August, 1846, he had recommended that "provisions should be made by law, at the earliest practicable period, for the organization of a territorial government for Oregon"; and that he had repeated the recommendation upon two subsequent occasions.[2] The population, he declared, is thought to exceed twelve thousand souls, and is being rapidly increased by immigration. "I deem it to be my duty again to impress on Congress the strong claim which the inhabitants of that distant country have to the benefit of our laws and to the protection of our government." That the whole Oregon region, comprising what is now the States of Oregon and Washington, was destined to remain Free-soil, no one could seriously doubt; and the House promptly passed the bill requested,[3] adding to it a clause

[1] Text, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 584–586.

[2] Second Annual Message of Dec. 8, 1846, and Third Annual Message, Dec. 7, 1847, *ibid.*, 471–506, and 532–564.

[3] August 2, 1848, *Cong. Globe*, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., 1027.

providing for the exclusion of slavery. To it the Senate at once added an amendment, providing for the extension of the Missouri Compromise line of 36° 30′ to the Pacific Ocean,[1] with the evident intention of granting compensation to the South, by opening to slavery so much of the territory acquired from Mexico as was suited to slave labor. The House refused to sanction this amendment, or to pass the amended bill. The Senate stubbornly adhered to its position until the very last day of the session, when it finally yielded; and Oregon was organized with slavery excluded, but without any provision affecting the question of what should be done with the territory acquired from Mexico.[2]

The debate over this Oregon bill, with the various amendments, had been so bitter as to cause serious alarm; but, before Congress again took up questions involving the organization of any part of the new West, a wonderful change had been wrought by the discovery of gold in California,[3] a change which settled the question of slavery so far as the California region was concerned.

The Story of the "Forty-Niners," is the story

[1] Text, *Cong. Globe*, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., 1062.

[2] *Ibid.*, Text, 1078–1080. It was approved by President Polk on Aug. 14, 1848. See Message of Aug. 14, 1848. Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 606.

[3] For the details of the discovery, see *Oregon and California in 1848*, by J. Quinn Thornton, 269 *et seq.* Thornton had served as Judge of the Supreme Court of Oregon, and had his book in press when "the world was astounded by a rapid succession of the most wonderful narratives of the discovery of boundless treasures, in our new possession of Upper California." He, therefore, prepared an appendix in which to present this new material, from which appendix I have drawn freely.

of perhaps the most remarkable migration and growth of a political community in all history. When the year 1848 opened, California was regarded as a comparatively unimportant province, interesting chiefly as a new field for slave extension. Early in January of that year, however, a New Jersey mechanic named Marshall, who was engaged in building a sawmill upon the south fork of the American River, a branch of the Sacramento, in California, noticed in the mill stream some yellow deposit which the water had brought down.[1] He gathered a pouch of it and took it to his employer, a Swiss called Captain Sutter, who applied such tests as he knew and satisfied himself that it was gold.[2] The two men agreed to keep secret their discovery until they could secure a title to the tract of land; but there was as yet no American official in the region competent to grant them a title, and one from the Mexican official they knew would be valueless. Sutter therefore decided to secure a lease from the Indians,[3] but, in his eagerness, allowed the fact of his discovery to leak out; and his mill hands at once started on a mad search for gold; while the news of the discovery spread throughout the continent and the world with startling rapidity. Within four months, four thousand men had entered the region.[4] Some worked at random with pick and shovel; some

[1] Thornton's *Oregon and California in 1848*, 270.

[2] H. H. Bancroft's *California*, vi, 38 *et seq.*, for description of the tests, etc.

[3] *Ibid.*, 41.

[4] Thornton's *Oregon and California in 1848*, 267–270.

washed the river sand in pans, and painfully separated the gold dust from the trash[1]; while others crawled into the crevices of the rocks and picked out the gold with knives.[2] One of the men who had accompanied Colonel Mason, the acting Governor of California, upon a tour of inspection of the gold fields, writes that, while "riding down the main dry digging," a teamster called out, "Come here, Captain, and look at this man picking out the gold." Turning aside, they watched the astonishing process. "He was picking out of the crevice in the slate, across which the water had pitched in winter to a bed some feet below, the gold and earth in lumps, and had his left hand full, when I saw him. I mean, he was picking it out of an open hole in the rock, as fast as you can pick the kernels out of a lot of well cracked shell-barks. . . . In less than half an hour the man got between five and six ounces of pure gold. They told me also that this was no very extraordinary picking."[3]

[1] Thomas O. Larkin to James Buchanan, Monterey, Cal., June 28, 1848.—Thornton's *Oregon and California in 1848*, 287.

[2] An ounce of gold was worth about $16 in New York. Governor Mason visited various points in the gold region, about three months after the discovery of gold; and his description of what he saw is preserved in Thornton's *Oregon and California in 1848*, 270–280. The gains, as he describes them, averaged very high. He estimated "that upward of 4000 men were working in the gold district, . . . and that from thirty to fifty thousand dollars worth of gold, if not more, was daily obtained." See, also, Walter Colton's letter of Aug. 29, 1848. Text, *ibid.*, 291–294.

[3] Anon. letter of Aug. 26, 1848. Text, Thornton's *Oregon and California in 1848*, 307–326. Walter Colton, in a letter of Aug. 29, 1848, declares: "on the hills and among the clefts of the rocks it is found in rough, jagged pieces of a quarter or half an ounce in weight, and sometimes two or three ounces."—*Ibid.*, 292.

As such tales were spread abroad, the rush for the gold fields became constantly greater. "The whole country is now moving on to the mines," wrote Walter Colton,[1] "Monterey, San Francisco, Sonoma, San José, and Santa Cruz are emptied of their male population." Adventurers from Mexico, China, Australia, the Sandwich Islands, and South America hastened to embark for the gold fields. Crews of visiting vessels, privates from the army, deserted, and rushed to the Sacramento region,[2] even the severe penalties attaching to the crime of military desertion being unavailing to stay them.

Reports from Thomas O. Larkin, Colonel R. B. Mason, and other government officials in California reached the War Department at Washington in December, 1848, and were published with President Polk's endorsement.[3] The American and the European presses took them up; and new armies of adventurers prepared for the long journey to California, having hunted up capitalists to charter vessels for the trip around Cape Horn, or

Some of the letters published at the time go quite beyond the point of credibility, in describing the size of nuggets. See, for example, *ibid.*, 328 and 334.

[1] Monterey, Aug. 29, 1848. Text, Thornton's *Oregon and California in 1848*, 291–297. For similar statements, see Larkin to Buchanan, *ibid.*, 280–283, and 283–289.

[2] "Sailors desert their ships as fast as they arrive on the coast," wrote Governor Mason, "and several vessels have gone to sea with hardly enough hands to spread a sail."—*Ibid.*, 277. Even American warships in the region suffered from desertion. On July 28, 1848, Thomas A. Jones, commander of the U. S. naval forces in the Pacific, wrote, "I have no hopes now of reclaiming any deserters who have got into the gold region."—*Ibid.*, 306. See also *ibid.*, 325 and 337.

[3] Text, *Executive Docs.*, 2d Sess., 30th Cong., vol. i, Doc. I. This volume also contains maps of the gold fields.

wagons for crossing the continent. Those who were too impatient to wait for such arrangements to be completed made their way to Central America by boat, crossed the Isthmus by a combination of canoe and mule travel,[1] and waited at Panama for some chance vessel to carry them to the gold fields.[2] Before many months had passed, the transportation companies were contracting for the whole journey from New York to San Francisco, including the transit of the Isthmus; and, on February 20, 1849, a committee of the House of Representatives presented an elaborate report[3] upon the construction of a canal or railroad between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. These rapid developments served to call attention to the importance of the isthmian transit; and a scramble between England and the United States for its control soon followed, resulting, in April, 1850, in the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, guaranteeing the neutrality of any canal which might be built at that point.[4]

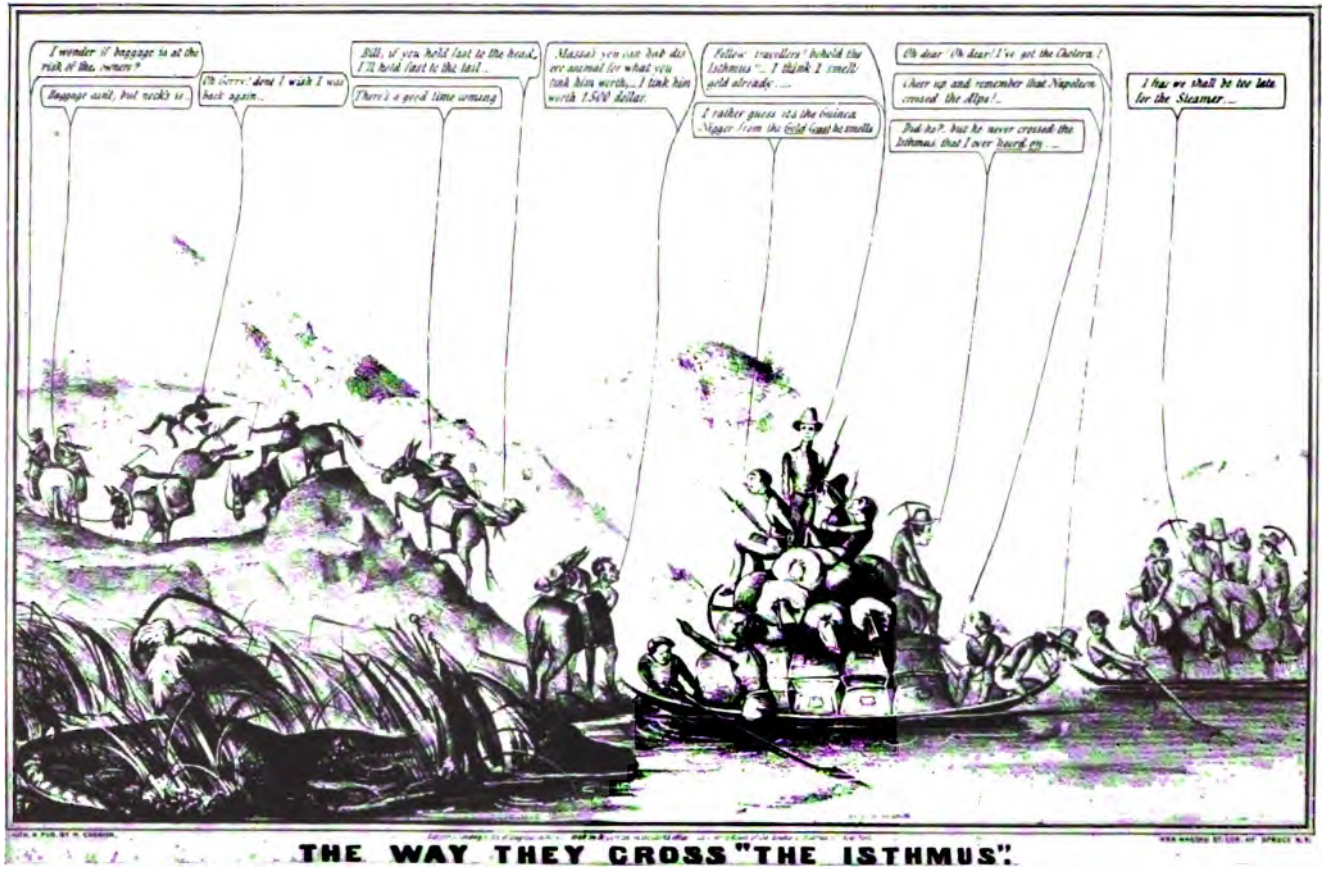
As soon as spring rendered it possible, swarms

[1] For details of how the transit of the Isthmus was made, see "Practical Directions to persons about to cross the Isthmus of Panama." Text, Thornton's *Oregon and California in 1848*, Appendix.

[2] Vessels for this service were soon abundant. J. Q. Thornton, writing only a few months after the discovery of gold, declared: "There are always two or three hundred sail of vessels in the Pacific; and we do not believe that any fears need be entertained of getting a speedy and reasonably cheap passage from either Panama, Mazatlan, Acapulco, or any other of the Pacific ports."—*Ibid.*, 348.

[3] Text, *Reports of Committees*, 2d Sess., 30th Cong., vol. ii, Report No. 145. This report contains 678 pages, with maps showing the character of the problem.

[4] Text of Clayton-Bulwer treaty, John Bassett Moore's *International Law Digest*, iii, 130 *et seq.*



From a lithograph published in 1849

of gold-seekers began the tedious journey across the North American continent in wagons[1]; and, in spite of the tremendous difficulties of the way, forty-two thousand made this overland journey in one year, while thirty-nine thousand reached California by sea during the same period.[2] Their sufferings were often severe. Pestilence and starvation followed in their wake[3]; while, in the gold country itself, anarchy and crime flourished unhindered, in the absence of an adequate police system. No definite land laws as yet existed; and each man took what he could get, and held what he could hold by virtue of his own prowess; yet the tide of immigration never slackened. The town of San Francisco, in February, 1848, numbered only two thousand souls. It closed the year with a total population of twenty thousand.[4] California which, at the beginning of 1848, had been a sparsely settled territory, became, by January, 1850, eligible for statehood, her population having reached the astonishing figure of one hundred and seven thousand.[5] Few of these adventurers brought slaves with them; and the mode of life which prevailed in

[1] For descriptions of some of the overland routes, with their relative advantages and disadvantages, see Thornton's *Oregon and California in 1848*, Appendix, p. 357 *et seq.*

[2] See House Miscellaneous Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vol. i, p. 16, for table showing the growth of California during the year 1849.

[3] Prices rose steadily. Writing only a few months after the discovery of gold, Colonel Mason declared: "Flour is already worth at Sutter's $36 a barrel, and soon will be $50." See price list in Appendix of Thornton's *Oregon and California in 1848*, 323.

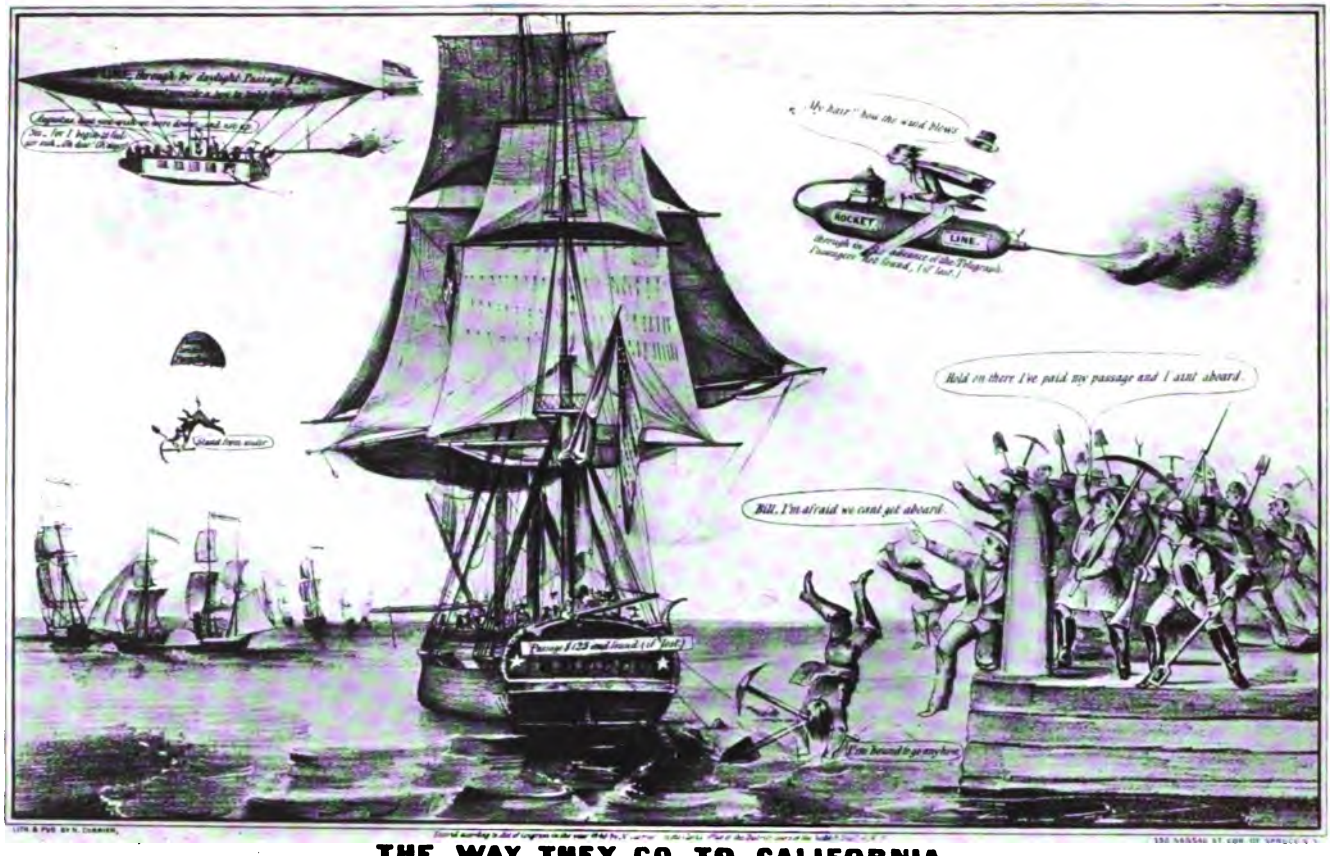
[4] Gihon and Nisbet, *Annals of San Francisco*, 244.

[5] Browne's *Report of the Debates in the Convention in California*, Appendix, xxii.

their new homes made it unlikely that the institution would be encouraged. Even the immigrants who were wise enough to follow the unromantic ways of trade and agriculture felt no desire to be burdened with slaves. "A plough, a yoke of oxen, and a ready will, with a reasonable knowledge of modern discoveries in agricultural chemistry," wrote one counselor of intending immigrants, "are sufficient to insure any young or middle-aged man, who goes to California, a golden and peaceful competency for his old age, and a handsome legacy for his children." Under such conditions, there was small incentive for men to enter California "carrying slave-property on their backs"; and it became increasingly evident that California as well as Oregon was destined to remain free from the pollution of slavery.

As the population increased, the need of a stable government became pressing. With a few settlers scattered over a wide area, as had been the case at the opening of the year 1848, government might be dispensed with; but, with a hundred thousand adventurers in the field, the conditions were altered. A government was now a necessity; and the American element, with frank encouragement from President Zachary Taylor, soon had one in process of formation. Meetings were held in various places and arrangements made for the choice of delegates to a convention for forming a state constitution.[1]

[1] This history of the origin of this Convention is given in the memorial asking for admission to the Union. Text, House Miscellaneous Docs., 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vol. i, p. 3 *et seq.*



THE WAY THEY GO TO CALIFORNIA.

From a lithograph published in 1849

On September 1, 1849, this convention met at Monterey, drafted a state constitution,[1] modeled upon the familiar American lines, and excluding slavery. On October 13th, it was signed by the forty-eight delegates,[2] and, one month later, was approved by the people, only eight hundred and eleven votes out of fifteen thousand being cast against it.[3] The first Legislature convened at San José on December 15th; and General Riley, then acting as governor, formally turned over to it the government of the territory.[4] John C. Frémont and William M. Gwin were elected to represent the new State in the United States Senate; and a memorial was drafted asking that California be admitted to the American Union as a free State.[5]

Meanwhile, the 31st Congress had assembled at Washington, on December 3, 1849; and, from the very first day of the session, it was evident that the questions which had rendered the organization of the Oregon Territory so difficult were present in intensified form. The Senators and Representatives of the free States and those of the slave

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The proceedings may be followed in John Ross Browne's *Report of the Debates in the Convention of California on the Formation of the State Constitution, in September and October, 1849.* Washington, John T. Towers, 1850. This volume contains the Proclamation of Governor Riley, recommending the formation of a State Constitution, the Journal of the Convention, a full list of the members, the full text of the Constitution, and other documents of importance.

[1] Text, *ibid.*, 18 to 33.

[2] Names of the signers, *ibid.*, 475.

[3] House Miscellaneous Docs., 1 Sess., 30th Cong., vol. i, 14.

[4] *Ibid.*, 15.

[5] Text, *ibid.*, 1–35, and Browne's *Report of Debates in the Convention of California*, Appendix, xiv to xxiii.

States were ready to renew the old struggle for the control of national territory; and no detail of legislative organization was too small to be the object of contest between them. A whole week was spent in the election of a door-keeper for the House[1]; and three weeks in balloting for a Speaker.

President Taylor's message[2] showed how keenly he was conscious of the spirit of contest which pervaded Congress. While urging favorable action upon California's expected petition for statehood, he expressed the hope that "exciting topics of sectional character which have hitherto produced painful apprehensions in the public mind" would not be discussed. "The people of New Mexico," he said, "will also, it is believed, at no very distant period present themselves for admission into the Union"; but his advice was that Congress await their application, thus leaving them free to decide for themselves what "shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

Even this warning did not seem to him sufficient, however; for, a few days later, he sent a special message,[3] urging that Congress abstain from any attempt to "annex a condition to her [California's] admission as a State, affecting her domestic institutions," and adding: "It is to be expected that in the residue of the territory ceded to us by Mexico, the people residing there will, at the time of their incorporation into the Union as a State, settle all

[1] Clay's *Works* (Colton, Reed, McKinley edition), iii, 303.
[2] Text, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, v, 9–24.
[3] Text, *ibid.*, 26–30.

questions of domestic policy to suit themselves."[1] As to the claim advanced by Texas "to a very large portion of the most populous district of the Territory commonly designated by the name New Mexico," he added, that can be readily adjusted "by judicial decision," when the territory shall have formed a State government and been admitted into the Union. "At present, however, no judicial tribunal has the power of deciding that question."

From these messages two things are clear. President Taylor believed that the people of the territory, and not the Congress of the United States, should decide the question whether a territory, upon becoming a state, should have slavery within its borders, and also that the wisest course was to settle each question, involving sectional feeling, at the time when its consideration was made necessary by the action of the settlers themselves. He wished Congress to act only upon questions which had been actually presented to it,[2] and to avoid offending the South by the discussion of the question, what shall be done with the rest of the territory acquired from Mexico. With the instinct of a man born and reared in a slave-holding community, he saw how fierce would be the resentment of the South at any attempt to revive the principle of the Wilmot Proviso, and to extend it to regions

[1] *Ibid.*, 29. This is a clear expression of the view later famous as the "Doctrine of Popular Sovereignty."

[2] His object, as Crittenden expressed it "was to avoid and suppress agitation by inaction, and by leaving the slavery question to be settled by the people of the respective territories." Coleman's *Crittenden*, i, 369.

which had not yet asked congressional action. But it was useless to hope that the general topic of slavery in the territories could be avoided in the 31st Congress; for the entire country was impatiently waiting to see what would be decided with reference to this all-absorbing question.[1]

The United States Senate was at that moment at the zenith of its glory. "At no time before or since . . . has its membership been so illustrious, its weight of character and ability so great."[2] The period was the meeting-point of two generations of eminent men. The statesmen of the Civil War period were already upon the floors of Congress; and some of the most brilliant forensic leaders of the Jeffersonian era yet remained. Clay, Calhoun, and Webster were still active[3]; but it was the last appearance together of this "Great Triumvirate," which had directed American affairs since the days of the Embargo. Each was prepared to solve, in his own way, the problems which had emerged out of the Mexican War; and the discussion of those problems was unavoidable. To confine that discussion to the question of admitting California was impossible. It was evident that she must be admitted with her free-soil constitution;

[1] In giving his assent to the bill for the organization of the Oregon territory, President Polk had declared: "Questions of such transcendent importance occasionally arise as to cast in the shade all those of mere party character. But one such question can now be agitated in this country, and this may endanger our glorious Union. . . . This question is slavery." Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, iv, 607.

[2] Blaine's *Twenty Years in Congress*, i, 90.

[3] Calhoun, Webster, Cass, and Benton were all born in the year 1782, Clay was five years their senior.

but the South was determined to demand adequate compensation for this addition to the already superior power of the Free States; which compensation must of necessity involve the larger question of what was to become of the rest of the territory acquired from Mexico.

Henry Clay had worked out an elaborate plan by which he hoped "to settle all the controverted questions arising out of the subject of slavery"[1]; which plan had been explained to Webster who was deliberating upon it.[2] Calhoun, eager as always to serve the South and gain the largest possible concessions to slavery, was prepared to use heroic methods, should occasion require. To his mind, the safety of the Union could only be secured by satisfying the South; by giving the fullest protection to "the peculiar institution."

On January 29, 1850, Clay unfolded his compromise scheme to the Senate.[3] It comprised eight propositions:

I. The admission of California, "without the imposition by Congress of any restriction in respect to the exclusion or introduction of slavery."

II. "As slavery does not exist by law, and is not likely to be introduced into any of the

[1] Clay's Speech of February 5, 1850. Clay's *Works* (Colton, Reed, McKinley edition), iii, 304.

[2] Curtis's *Webster*, ii, 397–398, for details of the interview.

[3] Text of Clay's *Resolutions*, Mallory's *Life and Speeches of Henry Clay*, ii, 602–606, and *Works of Henry Clay* (Colton, Reed, McKinley edition), iii, 301–302. Also Cong. Globe, xi, part i, 244–246.

territory acquired by the United States from the Republic of Mexico, it is inexpedient for Congress to provide, by law, either for its introduction into, or its exclusion from, any part of said territory. . . ."

III. "That the western boundary of the State of Texas ought to be fixed on the Rio del Norte. . . ."

IV. "That it be proposed to the State of Texas that the United States will provide for the payment of all that portion of all the legitimate and bona fide debts of that State, contracted prior to its annexation to the United States . . . upon the condition . . . that the said State . . . shall . . . relinquish to the United States any claim which it has to any part of New Mexico."

V. "That it is inexpedient to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, while that institution continues to exist in the State of Maryland, without the consent of that State, and without the consent of the people of the District, and without just compensation to the owners of slaves. . . ."

VI. "That the trade in slaves brought into the District of Columbia from places beyond its borders should be prohibited."

VII. "That more effectual provision ought to be made for the restitution of 'persons bound to service or labor, in any State, who may escape into any other State or Territory of this Union.'"

VIII. "That Congress has no power to prohibit or obstruct the trade in slaves between the slave-holding States. . . ."

A few days after the introduction of these compromise resolutions, Clay was assigned the floor to defend them.[1] The physical vigor which had marked his younger days was gone. He was so weak that he could not ascend the steps of the Capitol without assistance.[2] He felt that his days were numbered; and the ambition for the Presidency which had troubled him for so many years was gone. He had come to speak for the Union; to settle the questions which appeared to threaten her very existence. As he spoke, his physical vigor seemed to return; and, hour after hour, he urged the advantages of his compromise. Congress, he declared, has power over the territory acquired from Mexico "equal to the introduction or exclusion of slavery"; but "it is inexpedient . . . to provide by law either for its introduction or exclusion from any part of the said territory."

"What do you want who reside in the free States?" he asked his fellow Senators. "You want that there shall be no slavery introduced into the territories acquired from Mexico. Well, have you not got it in California already, if admitted as a State? Have you not got it in New Mexico, in all human probability, also? . . . You have got what is

[1] See Clay's Speech of Feb. 5 and 6, 1850. Text, *Works of Henry Clay* (Colton, Reed, McKinley edition), iii, 302–345.

[2] Colton's *Last Seven Years of Henry Clay*, 131.

worth a thousand Wilmot provisos. You have got nature itself on your side. You have the fact itself on your side."[1]

"Those . . . contending . . . for the Wilmot Proviso," he argued, "ought to reflect that, even if they could carry their object, . . . it ceases the moment any State or Territory to which it was applicable came to be admitted as a member of the Union. . . . No one believes . . ., with regard to those Northwestern States to which the Ordinance of 1787 applied, . . . but that any of those States, if they thought proper to do it, have just as much right to introduce slavery within their borders, as Virginia has to maintain the existence of slavery within hers." That is just the "decision made by California . . . which California had unquestionably the right to make under the Constitution of the United States." This statement shows clearly that Henry Clay believed that the prohibition of slavery "forever" in territory belonging to the United States could mean only, until that territory should become a State. It shows that he was conscious of the fact that his resolutions, if passed, would constitute a solemn declaration that every foot of territory belonging to the United States, whether north or south of the line 36° 30′,

[1] "In New Mexico, the nature of its soil and country, its barrenness, its unproductive character, everything which relates to it, . . . must necessarily lead to the conclusion, . . . that slavery is not likely to be introduced." Clay's *Works* (Colton, Reed, McKinley edition), iii, 312. This view was not original with Clay. Humboldt had long before called attention to it, as Waddy Thompson, former Minister to Mexico, had told Calhoun in a letter of Dec. 18, 1847, Jameson's *Correspondence of John C. Calhoun*, 1151.

had a perfect right to decide for itself, upon becoming a State, whether slavery should exist within its limits. In another part of his argument, he shows as clearly that he did not consider even the Missouri Compromise permanently binding. The question under consideration then, he declared, was "whether it was competent or not competent for Congress to impose any restriction which should exist after she became a member of the Union. . . . We contended that, whenever she was once admitted into the Union, she had all the rights and privileges of any pre-existing State, . . . and that among these . . . was one to decide for herself whether slavery should or should not exist within her limits; . . . and that, although subsequently admitted, she stood among her peers, equally invested with all the privileges that any one of the original thirteen States had a right to enjoy."[1]

Upon each of his eight resolutions Clay spoke at length. His argument was clear, logical, and judicial, with only an occasional burst of the impassioned eloquence upon which he so often depended. "The season of the year, and my own season of life," he sadly declared, "both admonish me to abstain from the use of any such ornaments; . . . and my sole desire is to make myself . . . understood."[2] Henry Clay, the ambitious politician was no more; and in the Speech on the Compromise Resolutions we find only Henry Clay, the patriot and the statesman, seek-

[1] Clay's *Works* (Colton, Reed, McKinley edition) iii, 305.
[2] *Ibid.*, 320.

ing to solve the old question in the old way. We can not justly censure him for failing to see that the old question could only be solved in a new way, the way which the new statesman, William H. Seward, later pointed out in the ringing phrase: "There is a higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain."[1]

Almost a month passed before the second member of the "Great Triumvirate" presented his views. On March 4th, John C. Calhoun appeared in the Senate chamber, swathed in flannels, and bringing with him a carefully written manuscript upon the questions dealt with in Clay's eight resolutions, his last plea for what he considered justice to the South.[2] Senator Mason, of Virginia, was selected to read it[3]; for disease and infirmity had carried its author beyond the point where prolonged debate was possible. Indeed, it was only his unconquerable will which enabled Calhoun to be present at all; for before the end of the month his sad and disappointed life had closed[4]. Upon this occasion he sat, "like some disembodied spirit reviewing the deeds of the flesh," and heard unmoved the words through which he was making his last appeal for his own south land.

Calhoun was unwilling to accept either President Taylor's plan or that of Henry Clay. The former, he declared, "is, in fact, but a modification of the Wilmot Proviso. It proposes to effect the

[1] Seward's *Works*, i, 51 *et seq.* [2] Text, *Works*, iv, 542–573.
[3] Von Holst's *Constitutional Hist. of the U. S.*, iii, 491. Rhodes's *Hist. of the U. S.*, i, 127. [4] Calhoun died on March 31, 1850.

same object,—to exclude the South from all territory acquired by the Mexican treaty. . . . There is no difference between it and the Wilmot [Proviso] except in the mode of effecting the object. . . . It takes care . . . to let in emigrants freely from the Northern States and all other quarters, except the South, which it takes special care to exclude by holding up to them the danger of having their slaves liberated under the Mexican laws. The necessary consequence is to exclude the South from the territory, just as effectively as would the Wilmot Proviso."

Clay's plans for a compromise, Calhoun considered no more satisfactory, from the point of view of the South. In its direction of the process of forming a State government and constitution for California, he declared: "the Executive Department has undertaken to perform acts . . . which appertain exclusively to Congress. . . . The assumption upon which the Executive, and the individuals in California, acted throughout this whole affair, is unfounded, unconstitutional, and dangerous."[1] By admitting California, under existing conditions, he declared, the Senate would "admit that the inhabitants of the territories possess the sovereignty over them, and that any number, more or less, may claim any extent of territory they please; may form a constitution and

[1] Only a few days before his death, Calhoun dictated to Joseph A. Scoville a set of resolutions denouncing "the attempt of the inhabitants of California to make a constitution and form a State without the permission of Congress." Text, *Annual Report of Amer. Hist. Association*, ii, 185–187.

government, and erect it into a State, without asking your permission. Are you prepared to surrender the sovereignty of the United States over whatever territory may be hereafter acquired to the first adventurers who may rush into it? Are you prepared to surrender virtually to the Executive Department all the powers which you have heretofore exercised over the territories?" This argument makes it quite clear that Calhoun, as well as Clay, was conscious of the fact that the fundamental principle underlying the proposed compromise was, as Douglas later stated it, neither to "legislate slavery into any territory or state, nor out of the same: but [to leave] the people . . . free to regulate their domestic concerns in their own way." It was "Popular Sovereignty"; and Calhoun's keen mind saw clearly that, upon that basis, the South could never compete with the North for the possession of national territory.

Calhoun's own views of the necessities of the case were uttered in the tone of an ultimatum. He spoke frankly as the champion of a section. Universal discontent, he declared, permeates the Slave States. The equilibrium of the States has been broken by the unjust encroachments of the Federal Government, by unjust tariff legislation, and by the Ordinance of 1787, the Missouri Compromise, and the provisions respecting the Oregon Territory, which have excluded the South from regions which she should have been left free to occupy. "The United States," he said, "since they declared their independence, have acquired

2,373,046 square miles of territory, from which the North will have excluded the South, if she should succeed in monopolizing the newly acquired territories."[1] "The character of the Government has been changed . . . from a Federal republic . . . into a great national consolidated democracy. . . . A single section governed by the will of the numerical majority has now, in fact, the control of the Government and the entire powers of the system. What was once a constitutional Federal republic is now converted, in reality, into one as absolute as that of the Autocrat of Russia, and as despotic in its tendency as any absolute government that ever existed." The cords that bind the States together are snapping one by one. To save the Union the dominant North must yield to the demands of the Slave States. Those demands are equal rights in the newly acquired territory, the return of fugitive slaves, the abandonment of agitation against slavery, and the adoption of a constitutional amendment that will restore the South to her old power of self-protection.[2] By this last demand, as his *Discourse on the Constitution and Government of the United States*[3] clearly shows, he meant that there must be two Presidents of the United States, one representing the Free States and the other the Slave States, each with a veto upon the acts of Congress. "If you, who represent the

[1] *Works*, iv, 548. [2] *Ibid.*, 572.

[3] A posthumous publication prepared by Calhoun during the period between the adjournment of Congress in the spring of 1848, and its meeting in December, 1849. Edition by Richard K. Cralle, 1851. His views on a plural Executive are elaborated on pp. 393 *et seq.*

stronger portion," he concluded, "cannot agree to settle them on the broad principles of justice and duty, say so; and let the States we both represent agree to separate and part in peace. If you are unwilling we should part in peace, tell us so, and we shall know what to do."

There were many other speeches delivered during the pendency of Clay's compromise plan; but the one which made the deepest impression upon the country at the time[1] was that of Daniel Webster, the third member of the "Great Triumvirate." Webster was just the age of Calhoun, and only about five years younger than Clay; but he was still vigorous in body as well as in mind; and the longing for the Presidency had by no means deserted him. He had thought Clay's compromise through to the end, and, on March 7th, appeared in the Senate and delivered the speech which he himself considered the most important effort of his life.[2] "I wish to speak, . . ." he said, "not as a Massachusetts man, not as a Northern man, but as an American"; and his speech has been properly called a speech for the Constitution and the Union. He attributed the Mexican War to the desire of the South for new slave territory, but pointed out

[1] Seward's "Higher Law Speech" probably produced more lasting effects, as giving the opponents of slavery an intelligible and definite basis upon which to contend against a system which had securely entrenched itself in the fundamental law of the land.

[2] Text, *Works*, v, 325–366.

"There was," writes George William Curtis in his Life of Webster (ii, 403), "but little written preparation for it. All that remains of such preparation is on two small scraps of paper."

the fact that the South had been disappointed of its object, California having adopted a free-soil constitution, with New Mexico showing symptoms of doing the same. He discussed at length the question of how the divergent opinions of North and South upon the question of slavery arose, and assigned cotton as the cause. He declared his determination to respect the Compromise of 1820, allowing States created from territory south of the line 36° 30′ to enter the Union with pro-slavery constitutions if they chose, but declared slavery forbidden by nature and by physical geography in most of the Territory of New Mexico. To cover them with a Wilmot Proviso, he declared, would be needlessly to "reaffirm an ordinance of nature" and "to reënact the will of God." It would only irritate the slave section and do no possible good. "Wherever there is a foot of land to be prevented from becoming slave territory, I am ready to assert the principle of the exclusion of slavery,"[1] but to assert it here would be to unnecessarily wound the feelings of others.

In this opinion, Webster and Clay showed keen statesmanship. They had studied the physical geography of the region, and had discovered that it was not fitted for the production of the staples in the cultivation of which slave labor had been found profitable.[2] California was already safe on the side of freedom. New Mexico was certain

[1] Webster's *Works*, vol. v, 353.

[2] For text of the correspondence of Webster which served to convince him of this fact, see Webster's *Works*, vi, 546 *et seq.*

to become so. Why irritate the South, therefore, by prohibiting slavery?

When Webster came to the discussion of Clay's seventh resolution providing for a more stringent fugitive slave law, he again agreed with its author. To his mind, trained in the legalistic view, it was not a question how a provision came into the Constitution, or whether it ought to be there: it was a matter of solemn obligation to obey it because it was there. For this reason Webster expressed his willingness to uphold by his vote and influence the enactment of a new fugitive slave law which would be operative. His attitude was a shock to the people of his own section, as he must have known that it would be; but, more than six weeks before, he had informed Clay of his substantial concurrence in his compromise plans[1]; and subsequent study and thought had only served to deepen his determination to defend them, whatever might be the views of his constituents. Edmund Burke's maxim was Webster's view of the duties and liberties of a representative. "Your representative," Burke had written,[2] "owes you not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion."

The "Seventh of March Speech" was immediately denounced throughout the North. Theo-

[1] See letter quoted by George Ticknor Curtis, in his Life of Daniel Webster, ii, 397–398. "I have heard Mr. Webster say," adds Curtis, "that he told Mr. Clay that, while he was not then prepared to concur in all the details of his plan . . . he could approve of it, with perhaps some modifications."—*Ibid.*, note.

[2] Speech to the Electors of Bristol.

dore Parker wrote: "I believe no one political act in America, since the treachery of Benedict Arnold, has excited so much moral indignation"[1]; which moral indignation was put into immortal form by the gentle Whittier, in the poem entitled "Ichabod" which Horace Mann recited before the National House of Representatives.[2] It mourns the fallen statesman in words of genius:

So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn,
Which once he wore!
The glory from his gray hairs gone
Forevermore!

. . . . .

Of all we loved and honored, naught
Save power remains,
A fallen angel's pride of thought,
Still strong in chains.

But whatever the anti-slavery men thought of the "Seventh of March Speech," it added tremendously to the strength of Clay's position. When the debate was ended, the Compromise resolutions, together with such other plans as had been proposed, was referred to a committee of thirteen, with Clay as chairman, and Webster as one of the Whig members.[3] On May 8, 1850, the committee made its report,[4] recommending substantially the

[1] *Works of Theodore Parker* (Francis Power Cobbe edition), v, 115.

[2] Appendix to Cong. *Globe*, 1st Sess., 32d Cong., xxv, 1079.

[3] Blaine's *Twenty Years in Congress*, i, 94, gives the details of the composition of this committee.

[4] For details of the report, see Colton's *Last Seven Years of Henry Clay*, 161 and 359. For text, see *Works of Henry Clay*, (Colton, Reed,

plan which Clay had outlined in his original eight propositions, though with their arrangement radically altered. The so-called Omnibus Bill contained the substance of Clay's first four resolutions, the admission of California with her free Constitution, no slavery restrictions upon the rest of the territory acquired from Mexico, and the buying off of the Texas claims to territory claimed also by New Mexico.[1] A second bill contained the provisions for a more stringent fugitive slave law; and a third provided for the exclusion of the slave market from the District of Columbia.

This rearrangement of the Compromise propositions did not operate as planned, however. Instead of uniting in its favor the friends of each separate measure subsumed under the Omnibus Bill, it served to combine against it the enemies of each measure and was defeated after months of debate.[2]

Clay then left the Capital in the vain hope of recovering his shattered health at the sea-side. A few days later he wrote from Newport to his son Thomas—and there is a ring of triumph in the letter—: "They are passing through the Senate, in separate bills, all the measures of our compromise, and if they shall pass the House also, I

McKinley edition) iii, 359 *et seq.* See also Senate Journal, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., 327, and Cong. *Globe*, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., xxii, Part I, p. 944 *et seq.*

[1] This bill contained thirty-nine sections. Clay's elaborate summary of these sections appears in the report of the Committee of Thirteen, Cong. *Globe*, 1st Sess., 31st Cong., xxii, Part I, p. 947 *et seq.*

[2] Lothrop's *Life of William H. Seward*, 96–99.

hope they will lead to all the good effects which would have resulted from the adoption of the compromise."[1]

This time he was not disappointed. All the measures which the committee had recommended were subsequently passed, each in a separate bill.

Had Taylor lived, these bills would probably have failed to become law[2]; but, in the midst of his opposition to Clay's plans, he was prostrated by an attack of cholera morbus, and, on July 9, 1850, died, leaving the Vice-President, Millard Fillmore, to conduct the affairs of his great office. Fillmore reorganized the Cabinet under Clay's advice; and Webster became Secretary of State. This produced harmony between the Administration and the leaders of the compromise movement. When Congress adjourned, therefore, in September, 1850, the process was complete. The chief questions which had arisen out of the Mexican War had been adjusted. The North had procured the admission of California as a free State, and the long-wished-for abolition of slave trade in the District of Columbia. The South was for the moment content that Utah and New Mexico were to be organized as territories without the hateful Wilmot Proviso, and that a new and effective fugitive slave law was to furnish them protection against the escape of their slaves; while Texas was soothed by the announcement that she would be given sixteen

[1] Clay to Thomas Clay, Newport, Aug. 15, 1850. Clay's *Works* (Colton, Reed, McKinley edition) iv, 612.

[2] Blaine's *Twenty Years in Congress*, i, 95.

millions of dollars in payment for her claims to territory over which New Mexico also claimed dominion.

And so both sections were content to regard the compromise measures as a finality[1]; and none could foresee the day when Stephen A. Douglas was to re-open the question of slavery in the territories by securing the assent of Congress to the proposition that the Compromise of 1850 had superseded that of 1820. Before that day arrived, however, the United States was again in controversy with Mexico; and again the differences were adjusted by the purchase of Mexican lands.

In his first annual message,[2] President Pierce informed Congress that a dispute had arisen "as to the true boundary line between our Territory of New Mexico and the Mexican State of Chihuahua. . . . There are also," he added, "other questions of considerable magnitude pending between the two Republics [but] our Minister in Mexico has ample instructions to adjust them."

Of these "other questions" one of the most annoying was the pledge, embodied in the eleventh article of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, that the

[1] In the campaign of 1852 which made Franklin Pierce President, both the Democrats (Article XIII of their platform) and the Whigs (Article VIII of their platform) pledged themselves to the Compromise as a finality. The Free-soil party, however, declared: "The doctrine that any human law is a finality . . . is not in accordance with the creed of the founders of our Government, and is dangerous to the liberties of the people." See Platform, Article VIII. Their vote, however, was only 156,149, out of a total of 3,144,610, almost negligible as an index of popular opinion.

[2] Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, v, 210–211.

government of the United States would forcibly restrain the Indians dwelling near the Mexican borders from making incursions into Mexican territory, and would see that prisoners taken in such raids were restored. This obligation had proved far more difficult and expensive than had been anticipated; and a strong desire was felt to escape from it. In addition to this, the free transit of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, which Trist had been unable to secure,[1] was increasingly important for the United States, in view of the westward extension of American railway systems.

The chief points in dispute were, however, soon adjusted in a treaty which, on February 10, 1854, President Pierce laid before the Senate with the request that it be ratified.[2] The details of the negotiation had been carefully guarded, James Gadsden, who had negotiated the treaty, actually bringing the document to Washington and delivering it with his own hands. It provided for the purchase of about 45,535 square miles of territory, including "the Gila River Route," which was greatly desired in order to enable the projected

[1] Trist's instructions of April 15, 1847, had declared: "Instead of $15,000,000 stipulated to be paid by the fifth article for the extension of our boundary over New Mexico and Upper and Lower California, you may increase the amount to any sum not exceeding $30,000,000 . . . provided the right of passage and transit across the isthmus of Tehuantepec, secured to the United States by the eighth article of the project, shall form a part of the treaty." Text, *Senate Executive Documents*, 1st Sess., 30th Cong., vii, Doc. 52, p. 82.

[2] Text of Message, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, v, 229–230. The text of instructions and correspondence relative to the negotiation of the treaty were submitted to the Senate by the President on March 21, 1854. See Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, v, 235.

Southern Pacific railroad to construct its roadbed wholly upon American soil[1]; and it called for an appropriation of $10,000,000.

After considerable opposition, the Senate ratified this treaty, a number of amendments having been first inserted; and Gadsden took it back to Mexico, where it was accepted without serious opposition. On June 30, 1854, ratifications were exchanged; and the Gadsden Purchase, the last addition of territory adjacent to the Republic of the United States,[2] became a part of the national domain. For a time it was incorporated with the Territory of New Mexico,[3] but was later divided between New Mexico and Arizona.

[1] Haney's *Congressional History of Railroads*, 114 and 120.

[2] The boundary line is given in Pierce's Proclamation of June 2, 1856. Text, Richardson's *Messages and Papers*, v, 393.

[3] Act of August 4, 1854, U. S. Statutes at Large, 32d–33d Cong., 1851–1855, p. 575.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PURCHASE OF RUSSIAN AMERICA

1846–1868

AMONG the dreamers of empires, William H. Seward is entitled to high rank. During his public life, his imperialistic vision contemplated the acquisition, by the United States, of Hawaii, Cuba, Hayti, San Domingo, and the Danish West Indian Islands,[1] St. Thomas and St. John, as well as the entire American continent from the arctic circle to the Isthmus of Panama.[2] His bold imagination even bridged the Pacific and touched the dominions of the ancient Empire of China. "Russia and the United States," he wrote to Cassius M. Clay,[3] "may remain good friends until, each having made a circuit of half the globe in opposite directions, they shall meet and greet each other in regions where civilization first began."[4] But, like many a

[1] He actually negotiated a treaty for the purchase of the Danish West Indies, but it was beaten in the Senate by the opponents of Johnson.

[2] Frederick W. Seward's *Seward at Washington as Senator and Secretary of State*, 372.

[3] Seward to Cassius M. Clay in 1861. Quoted in Frederic Bancroft's *Seward*, ii, 472.

[4] That England also had her views of manifest destiny in this region is indicated by a phrase which Sumner quotes from a British colonial

famous dreamer of dreams, his meed of accomplishment was but a fragment of the things which his imagination had pictured; for to him America owes but one item in her long history of national expansion. Russian America, or Alaska, as Sumner christened it,[1] is Seward's contribution to "the Winning of the Far West."

The idea of purchasing this province was frequently considered before Seward adopted it. During the Oregon debates of 1846, it was suggested that, in addition to the whole of Oregon, up to 54° 40′, the United States should secure Russian America, paying for it the sum which Russia should demand; but there was no economic or political force which could be invoked in aid of such a project; and the mere instinct to extend the coast line

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newspaper: "The Anglo-Norman and the Russian [will] yet gaze at each other from the opposite sides of Bering Strait." Speech on the Cession of Alaska, 226.

[1] Toward the close of his Speech on the Cession of Alaska, April 9, 1867, Charles Sumner declared: "It only remains that, following these natives, whose places are now ours, we, too, should call this 'great land' Alaska." (*Works*, xi, 347.) In a letter to Hiram Barney, written on May 8, 1868, Sumner says that, in preparing his speech, his "attention was arrested by the designation of the promontory stretching to the Aleutian Islands, called by Captain Cook . . . Alaska. . . . This," he adds, "is the first time, so far as I am aware, that the name appears. . . . On this account, at the close of my speech, I ventured to propose it as a name for the whole country."

A few weeks later, on May 25th, Hilgard, of the Coast Survey, wrote Sumner that in issuing a new edition of the map of the region formerly called Russian America, he had "ventured to put on it the name Alaska proposed by you, as I have no doubt it will be generally adopted." *Ibid.*, 348.

Seward's part in the naming of Alaska, therefore, was apparently confined to the selection of this, out of several names which had been suggested. See Seward's *Seward*, 369.

proved too weak a driving power. In the summer of 1854, during the Crimean War, Baron Stoeckl formally proposed to sell the whole of the Russian American possessions to the United States; but President Pierce "declined the offer, for reasons never made public."[1] In December, 1859, Senator William M. Gwin of California started a movement for the purchase of this territory, but it was swallowed up in the deluge of the Civil War.[2]

During the next year, the Russian American Company, to whom the Emperor, Paul I, by a oukaz of 1799,[3] had granted the "use and profit . . . [of] everything . . . in those localities, on the surface and in the bosom of the earth, without any competition by others," applied for a renewal of its monopoly; but this was refused, except upon terms which the company did not care to accept. The monopoly rights of the company, therefore, ceased on January 1, 1862,[4] when the existing charter expired. Two years later, Prince Maksutof assumed control of the company's affairs by appointment of the imperial government[5]; and the company ceased to enjoy any special privileges in the region.

[1] New York *Herald*, April 29, 1867. [2] Sumner's *Works*, xi, 203.

[3] Dated Dec. 27, 1799. It was confirmed by the Emperor on July 8, 1799, and was to expire on January 1, 1822. It was, however, prolonged for another twenty years on Sept. 13, 1821, and again on January 1, 1842. See Lieutenant Captain Golovin's Survey of Russian Colonies in North America. Text, House Exec. Docs., 2d Sess., 40th Cong., xiii, Doc. 177, p. 111.

The text of the oukaz is given in Bancroft's *Alaska*, 534–568. See also Dall's *Alaska and its Resources*, 332 and 341.

[4] Dall's *Alaska and its Resources*, 354.

[5] H. H. Bancroft's *Alaska*, 579.

To the imperial government of Russia, however, the possession of so distant a province was only a menace. In time of peace, it was of no value; while in time of war it was a distinct liability, standing an easy prey to her deadliest enemy, the British nation. In alienating it, therefore, Russia would not be parting with anything of value, as her statesmen understood the situation; while it was evident that its possession might be regarded as of some importance to the United States, whose Monroe Doctrine was opposed to the idea of an extension of the British coast line on the Pacific.[1] Therefore, if we may trust information contained in the official dispatches of our Russian Minister, Cassius M. Clay,[2] Emperor Nicholas, in 1863, intimated to the Honorable R. J. Walker that he was willing "to give us Russian America if we would close up our coast possessions to 54° 40′. But the slave-interest," adds Clay, "fearing this new accession of 'free-soil,' yielded the point, and let England into the great ocean."

[1] An article purporting to come from the *British Colonists*, a newspaper of Victoria in Vancouver's Island, declared: "The strip of land which stretches along from Portland Canal to Mount St. Elias . . . must eventually become the property of Great Britain." Quoted in Sumner's Speech on the Cession, 225.

"That nation which struggled so hard for Vancouver and her present Pacific boundary, . . ." said Leonard Myers, in the debate in the House over the appropriation of the sum stipulated in the treaty of purchase, "will never let such an opportunity slip. Canada, as matters now stand, would become ours some day could her people learn to be Americans; but never, if England secures Alaska." Blaine's *Twenty Years in Congress*, ii, 336.

[2] Clay to Seward, May 10, 1867. Text, Diplomatic Correspondence, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., vol. i, p. 390.

During our Civil War, Russia's generous sympathy for the cause of the Union produced a feeling of active friendship for her throughout the Northern States. In the trying days of 1863, "two large Russian fleets, as if by accident, at the same time, [anchored] one in the harbor of New York, and the other in the bay of San Francisco—a silent but eloquent hint to keep hands off."[1] This act was "intended by the Emperor, and accepted by the United States, as a friendly demonstration"[2]; which friendly feeling further took the practical form of granting to the United States "liberty to carry prizes into Russian ports."[3] It had also been agreed, in 1861, that the two governments should act together for the establishment of a connection between San Francisco and St. Petersburg by an inter-oceanic telegraph across Bering Strait[4]; and the work had been begun by the Western Union Telegraph Company and pushed with vigor, the failure of the Atlantic cable having left a clear field. The line had been actually completed as far as New Westminster in British Columbia,[5] and such progress made on

[1] New York *Herald*, April 29, 1867.

[2] Sumner's Speech on the Cession of Alaska, *Works*, xi, 230.

[3] *Ibid.* See also "Notes informally submitted to the Chairman of the Committee in the Senate, with the Alaska treaty, by the Secretary of State," House Exec. Docs., 2d Sess., 40th Cong., xiii, Doc. 177, p. 4.

[4] *Ibid.*

The plan was sanctioned by Congress by an act of July 1, 1864. See Statutes at Large, xiii, 340–341.

[5] For details of the trip to project the line, see Frederick Whymper's *Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska*, 89 *et seq.* See also Diplomatic Correspondence, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., i, appendix ii, and House Executive Docs., 2d Sess., 40th Cong., xiii, p. 25 *et seq.*

both continents as would have secured the completion of the entire structure before the end of the year 1868,[1] had not the success of a renewed attempt to bridge the Atlantic by cable removed every material inducement to prosecute the construction of the Russian line.

On March 28, 1867, Seward notified the American Minister at St. Petersburg that pending negotiations would soon result in the transfer of Russian America to the United States, a consummation toward which his mind had been steadily set for years. In September, 1860, he had declared in a characteristically imperialistic speech at St. Paul,[2] Minnesota: "Standing here, and looking far off into the northwest, I see the Russian, as he busily occupies himself in establishing seaports, and towns, and fortifications, on the verge of this continent, as the outposts of St. Petersburg; and I can say: 'Go on, and build up your outposts all along the coast, up even to the Arctic ocean—they will yet become the outposts of my own country.'"

With such an interest in the ice-bound province, shared by none of his colleagues in the Cabinet, and with sources of information which were not open to others, Seward alone of all Americans then in public life realized the importance of this territorial possession. He knew that for years the

[1] Western Union Telegraph Company to Mr. Seward, March 25, 1857. Text, Diplomatic Correspondence, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., i, pp. 385–386.

[2] Frederick W. Seward's *Seward at Washington as Senator and Secretary of State*, 346. Text, Seward's *Works* (Baker's edition), iv, 332.

inhabitants of the Washington Territory[1] had cast longing glances toward the rich fishing-grounds off the coast of Russian America which had been closed to them since the year 1834.[2] During the winter of 1866, through their Legislature, they had forwarded to him a memorial[3] calling attention to the excellence of the Russian-American fishing-grounds and asking "such rights and privileges of the Government of Russia, as will enable our fishing vessels to visit the ports and harbors of its possessions." With this as an entering wedge, he had sounded the Russian authorities, and had found that their desire to dispose of their American possessions was no less keen than it had been in earlier days. He had learned that the Czar, like Napoleon in 1803, when approached with the proposition for the purchase of a depot at the mouth of the Mississippi, was eager to give England a rival that would "sooner or later humble her pride." Baron Stoeckl, the Russian Minister, had returned to St. Petersburg in October, and in February, 1867, was back in Washington armed with authority to treat concerning the

[1] Washington Territory had been organized in 1853. By 1868, its population numbered about 35,000. See Reports of Committees of the House, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., i, Doc. 37, p. 10.

[2] Under the Russian American treaty of April 17, 1824, American citizens, while bound to establish no settlements north of 54° 40′, were to be allowed to fish and trade in Russian dominion. This privilege had been continued, in spite of the protests of the Russian American Company, until 1834, when it had been withdrawn. See Dall's *Alaska and its Resources*, 337.

[3] Dated Jan. 10-13, 1866. Text, House Executive Docs., 2d Sess., 40th Cong., xiii, Doc. 177, pp. 4, 5.

sale of all the Czar's American possessions. Shortly afterward, Seward received a note from Stoeckl, practically concluding the preliminaries incident to the sale. "I have had the honor," he wrote,[1] "to receive the note which you were pleased to address to me on March 23d . . . to inform me that the . . . territory to be ceded to the United States must be free from any engagement and privileges conceded either by the government or by companies.

"In answer, I believe myself authorized . . . to accede literally to this request. . . ."

Any lingering doubts upon the subject were removed four days later by the receipt of instructions from Russia to close the transaction[2]; and Stoeckl went at once to the house of the American Secretary of State to inform him of that fact. He found Mr. Seward engaged at the whist table; and, after delivering the news,[3] he added: "To-morrow I will come to the Department, and we can enter upon the treaty."[4]

Seward's reply was characteristic. "Why wait till to-morrow? . . ." he said. "Let us make the treaty to-night."

[1] Stoeckl to Seward, March 25, 1867. Text, Diplomatic Correspondence, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., i, 399.

[2] These instructions came by the Atlantic cable. Sumner's Speech on the Cession, 209.

[3] Seven million dollars was the sum first agreed upon, but, on May 23, Seward had written that he would add 200,000 to that sum upon the condition that the cession "be free and unincumbered by any reservations." Seward to Stoeckl, May 23, 1867. Text, House Executive Docs., 2d Sess., 40th Cong., xiii, Doc. 177, 134.

[4] Seward's *Seward*, 348, for fuller details.

Sumner, chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, was summoned; and by four o'clock the next morning the treaty was signed,[1] providing for the purchase of Russian America by the United States, for the sum of $7,200,000 in gold, representing, with the premium then on gold, about $10,000,000 in the currency of the government.[2] "The cession of territory and dominion herein made," said the sixth article, "is hereby declared to be free and unencumbered by any reservations . . . whether corporate or incorporate, Russian or any other, or by any parties, except merely private individual property holders."

Thus was concluded a treaty unique in the annals of American diplomacy, a "treaty conceived, initiated, prosecuted, and completed, without being preceded or attended by protocols or despatches,"[3] and one which completed the purchase of an imperial domain for which no public desire had been manifested. It was, in a literal sense, what its opponents in the House of Representatives later indignantly termed it, "Seward's treaty."

It was sent the same day to the Senate, where it was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations; and the news of its conclusion was given to the press, and through it to the astonished public.[4]

[1] The text of the treaty, and the correspondence in relation to Russian America, are given in *House Exec. Docs.*, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., xiii, Doc. 177. This document consists of 380 pages relating to the purchase of Alaska. [2] Blaine's *Twenty Years in Congress*, ii, 334.

[3] Notes informally submitted with the Alaska treaty, by the Secretary of State. *House Exec. Docs.*, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., xiii, 3.

[4] The press of the country was almost unanimous in opposition to the ratification of the treaty of purchase.—*Ibid.*, 36.

"The country will be surprised," said the *Newark Advertiser* of April 1, 1867, "by the announcement that a treaty has been completed between the United States and Russia, by which the latter cedes to the former all her possessions on the American continent in consideration of a sum said to be $7,000,000 and that the treaty only needs the ratification of the Senate to go into effect.

"Strategically and politically this cession is of . . . importance. . . . If we annex Russian America, it will be the signal for re-opening the discussion . . . of acquiring the once coveted British Columbia and the line of the Saskatchewan.

"We presume that there will be little opposition to the ratification of the treaty. It offers some present advantages to us, which no other nation has the right to object to, while it holds out a hope of more substantial acquisition to be reached in the future by negotiation with England."

Meanwhile, the Senate committee had taken up the discussion of the treaty. To all of the members it was a surprise. Charles Sumner, the chairman, had been invited to the midnight meeting of March 29th, and by only so much was he wiser than his fellow-committee men. Like Seward himself, however, Sumner was a thorough imperialist, looking for the day when the Republic should control the entire North American continent, all other nations "giving way to the absorbing Unity declared in the national motto, *E pluribus unum.*"[1]

[1] Sumner's *Works*, xi, 223.

In the purchase of Russian America he saw a "visible step" in that direction,[1] and gave the measure his hearty support. On behalf of his committee he reported favorably to the Senate, on April 8th, making an elaborate address of three hours in its support.[2] Russia, he declared, is in need of ready money, so poor "that these few millions may not be unimportant to her." Her unguarded American possessions, furthermore, would fall an easy prey to England in the event of hostilities. Her possession is almost nominal; and in ceding the province she gives up no part of herself. This treaty, he significantly added, "is a new expression of that *entente cordiale* between the two powers which is a phenomenon of history. . . . The archives of the State Department show an uninterrupted cordiality between the two governments dating far back in our history"; but "I hope that this treaty may not be drawn into a precedent, at least in the independent manner of its negotiation. I would save to the Senate an important power justly belonging to it."[3] "Now that the treaty has been signed . . . [however] . . . it is difficult to see how we can refuse to complete the purchase without putting to hazard the friendly relations which happily subsist between the United States and Russia." [4]

Sumner's grasp of the subject and his eloquent

[1] E. L. Pierce's *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner*, iv, 325.

[2] Text, Sumner's *Works*, xi, 186–350. The speech was delivered on April 9th. It was considerably amplified before it was published.

[3] *Ibid.*, 232. [4] *Ibid.*, 231.

presentation of the case attracted wide-spread attention.[1] His argument was convincing; and, in the vote which was taken the same day, only two Senators, Fessenden and Morrill, voted against the ratification of the treaty. "Russian ambition," declared the Philadelphia *North American and Gazette* of April 12th,[2] with an interest and sympathy for the treaty which it had before concealed, "has disappeared from the American continent and devoted its attention to the vast wastes of Asia. . . . Those who reproach the Senators from the Pacific States for their anxiety to make this acquisition should remember that it was by an exactly similar policy that Florida, Louisiana, and Texas were annexed, and our Atlantic seaboard extended to such magnificent dimensions. . . . The trouble and anxiety we have had from having such neighbors as England in Canada, France in Mexico, and Spain in Cuba ought to convince the most skeptical that our aim should be to have no neighbors at all."

The reasons which led to the purchase are thus stated, in the report of the Committee on Foreign affairs: "First the laudable desire of citizens of

[1] In its revised form the speech contained ten pages of critical discussion upon the "Sources of Information upon Russian America"; and over a hundred pages are devoted to a discussion of the "Character and Value" of the region. In the latter sections he discourses at length concerning (1) Government, (2) Population, (3) Climate, (4) Vegetable Products, (5) Mineral Products, (6) Furs, and (7) Fisheries, presenting an astonishing body of information concerning a region then comparatively unknown.

[2] Sumner's *Works*, xi, 184. Philadelphia *North American and Gazette*, April 12, 1867, article on Russian America.

the Pacific coast to share in the prolific fisheries of the oceans, seas, bays, and rivers of the western world; the refusal of Russia to renew the charter of the Russian American Fur Company in 1866; the friendship of Russia for the United States; the necessity of preventing the transfer, by any possible chance, of the northwest coast of America to an unfriendly power; the creation of new industrial interests on the Pacific necessary to the supremacy of our empire on sea and land; and finally, to facilitate and secure the advantages of an unlimited American commerce with the friendly powers of Japan and China."[1]

The treaty was proclaimed, on June 20th, by President Johnson,[2] who, without waiting for the House to make the necessary appropriation, sent Major-General Rousseau to receive possession.[3] He then, on July 6, 1867, laid the completed treaty of cession before the House, with the request that the stipulated sum of $7,200,000 in gold be appropriated.

When Congress assembled in November, no small discontent was expressed by the many and bitter opponents of Johnson, not only that he had ventured to take the territory before the House had expressed its views, but because many claimed that the price promised was far in excess of the value of the territory. Before the question of the ap-

[1] Quoted, H. H. Bancroft's *Alaska*, 595.

[2] Text of the Proclamation, Dall's *Alaska*, 359–363.

[3] Rousseau's instructions are given in the *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., i, 405. Those of Captain Pestchouroff, the commissioner of transfer appointed by Russia, are given in *ibid.*, 404.

propriation was seriously taken up, however, the movement to impeach Johnson had been launched; and partizan bias was so greatly aggravated that it did not seem wise to push the question.

Meanwhile, preparations for the ceremony of transferring the Russian province to the American nation were in progress. Vessels from various ports along the Pacific coast were congregating about New Archangel, and discharging their passengers, official and unofficial, all curious to see "Seward's polar-bear garden," as the enemies of the purchase had contemptuously christened it. "At early dawn, Wednesday, October 8th," wrote the special correspondent of *Alta California*, from the vessel *John L. Stephens*,[1] "the more expectant of the passengers were up to catch the first glimpse of the 'promised land.' But the clouds hung sullenly over the water till long after breakfast, when suddenly the sun broke through . . . and Mount Edgcombe, the chief landmark of Sitka Sound, appeared to the northwest of us. . . . A series of low, narrow islands skirt its head, lying within less than a mile of the shore, behind the largest of which is the town of Sitka, as it is called by the Californians, or New Archangel, as it is [called] by its inhabitants." The wind being fresh and the pilot uncertain of the channel, Captain Dall lay to and sent a boat to the town. A harbor pilot was soon on board; and "we passed through

[1] His letters, signed Del Norte, give interesting details of the voyage and of the ceremony of taking possession. Text, *House Exec. Docs.*, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., xiii, Doc. 177, 67–81.

the western inlet, and at noon came to anchor a mile from the town. The clouds had now disappeared, revealing the magnificent surroundings of the harbor. Sitka lies more than half encircled by a group of cone-like mountains, remarkable for their precipitous sides and sharply-pointed summits. On a clear day, the harbor and the town itself can boast of scenery equalled by few in the world, and certainly surpassed by none in North America."

In describing the experiences of Saturday, October 12th, the writer records this interesting circumstance: "According to our ship calendar it was Saturday, October 12th, but on shore it was the Russian Sunday. Civilization radiating from Europe, and carrying with it, both east and west, the observance of the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath, had . . . met on the opposite side of the globe upon the islands of the north Pacific. Advancing eastward, every fifteen degrees of longitude brought the beginning of the day an hour earlier. As the settlement of this coast came from Russia eastward, bringing with the Russian flag western time, the day is earlier by twenty-four hours with them than with us . . . who are bringing the American flag and a consequent later time westward. Hence their Sunday is our Saturday, and the other days of the week are in corresponding discord."

Six days later, on October 18th by the American calendar, the transfer was made. The eastward trend of Russia's march of empire had been

turned back by the Anglo-Saxon "course of empire" rolling west.[1] Russian America had become the Territory of Alaska, although no fraction of the purchase money had as yet been appropriated by the House of Representatives.

On December 19, 1867, the House sent to the President a resolution "calling for correspondence and information in relation to Russian America." In reply, President Johnson, transmitted the reports which had come to him from the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury.[2] Here the matter rested, until May 18th, when Banks, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, reported a bill for making the appropriation;[3] but it was not taken up for debate for another six weeks. It was thus June 30, 1868, when the House began the long debate upon the appropriation bill.[4] Banks urged its passage, on account of the value of the concession, the fact that the government was already pledged by

[1] The arrival of the *Ossipee* with Rousseau, the American commissioner of transfer, and the United States troops detailed to occupy the new territory, and the ceremony of transfer are graphically described by Del Norte, in a letter dated Sitka, October 18, 1867. *Ibid.*, 71.

General Jeff. C. Davis's report of the expedition on board the *John L. Stephens* gives some additional details of the ceremony. Text, *ibid.*, 107–109.

[2] This collection of documents appears in the *House Exec. Docs.*, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., xiii, Doc. 177, pp. 1–361. It contains practically all the information then in the possession of the government relative to the purchase of or the character of Russian America.

[3] *Cong. Globe*, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., Part III, pp. 2527, 2528. The text of this report occupies pp. 1–43 of *Committee Reports of the House*, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., Doc. 37.

[4] House Bill No. 1096. See *ibid.*, 3620.

the treaty, now the law of the land,[1] and because Russia had stood our friend during the trying days of civil war. "In the darkest hour of our peril," he said, ". . . when we were enacting a history which no man yet thoroughly comprehends, when France and England were contemplating the recognition of the Confederacy, the whole world was thrilled by the appearance in San Francisco of a fleet of Russian war vessels, and nearly at the same time, whether by accident or design, a second Russian fleet appeared in the harbor of New York. Who knew how many more there were on their voyage here? From that hour France, on the one hand, and England, on the other, receded, and the American government regained its position and its power. . . . Now, shall we flout the Russian Government in every court in Europe for her friendship? Whoever of the representatives of the American people in this House, on this question, turns his back, not only upon his duty, but upon the friends of his country, upon the Constitution of his Government, and the honor of his generation, cannot long remain in power."[2]

Washburn, of Wisconsin, answered Banks's argument,[3] dwelling upon the fact that the treaty had been entered into secretly and without the faintest

[1] To this proposition Representative Loughridge took violent exception, claiming, as the Democrats had claimed when the appropriation of money called for in Jay's treaty of 1794 had been pending, that the consent of the House was necessary to make the treaty binding. Text of his speech, *ibid.*, 3621–3625.

[2] Text, *Cong. Globe*, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., Part III, appendix, 385–392.

[3] July 1, 1868. Text, *ibid.*, 392.

shadow of a public demand for such a purchase. We possess already, by existing treaties, he said, every advantage which the ownership of this wilderness region could give us,[1] a region valueless, and peopled by savages. In reply to which declaration, Mr. Mungen declared himself "authorized by gentlemen abundantly able to fulfill it, to make the following proposition . . . that a Company of gentlemen will, within twenty days from and after the date when Congress assents . . . pay into the Treasury of the United States the sum of $10,000,000 in gold for the territory of Alaska; these gentlemen taking the fee simple thereof and leaving the right of eminent domain in the Government of the United States."[2] As an argument for the value of the territory this was unanswerable; but, though made in good faith, it was not seriously considered, as the time for such proprietary establishments as this would have produced had long passed in this country.

For two weeks the debate was continued, the greatest surprise occurring when Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, the vindictive and relentless enemy of the Administration, rose in defence of the appropriation.[3] The Constitution, he said, "gives to the President and Senate the sole power to make treaties, and when made declares them the supreme law. . . . If the treaty provides that any other branch of the Government is to do an act which it

[1] Washburn's views are also set forth in the document entitled "Views of the Minority." Text, Committee Reports of the House, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., Doc., 37, pp. 44–65.

[2] *Cong. Globe*, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., Part III, 3659. [3] *Ibid.*, 3660–3661.

refuses to do, that does not annul the treaty. It stands as a supreme obligation like a national bond repudiated by the obligor."[1]

Finally, on July 14, 1868, the appropriation bill passed the House.[2] The Senate, having already discussed the question, assented without debate,[3] the President affixed his name on July 27th,[4] and the Winning of the Far West was complete.

In looking backward over the process, we cannot fail to see manifest destiny in almost every page. Texas was annexed by one process; California and the great southwest, by another; the Oregon Territory by a third; the Gadsden Purchase and the Province of Alaska by one still different. What the future may yet have in store for the Republic no man can tell. The past alone belongs to history, and as world-politics run, it has been a past of which no American need feel ashamed.

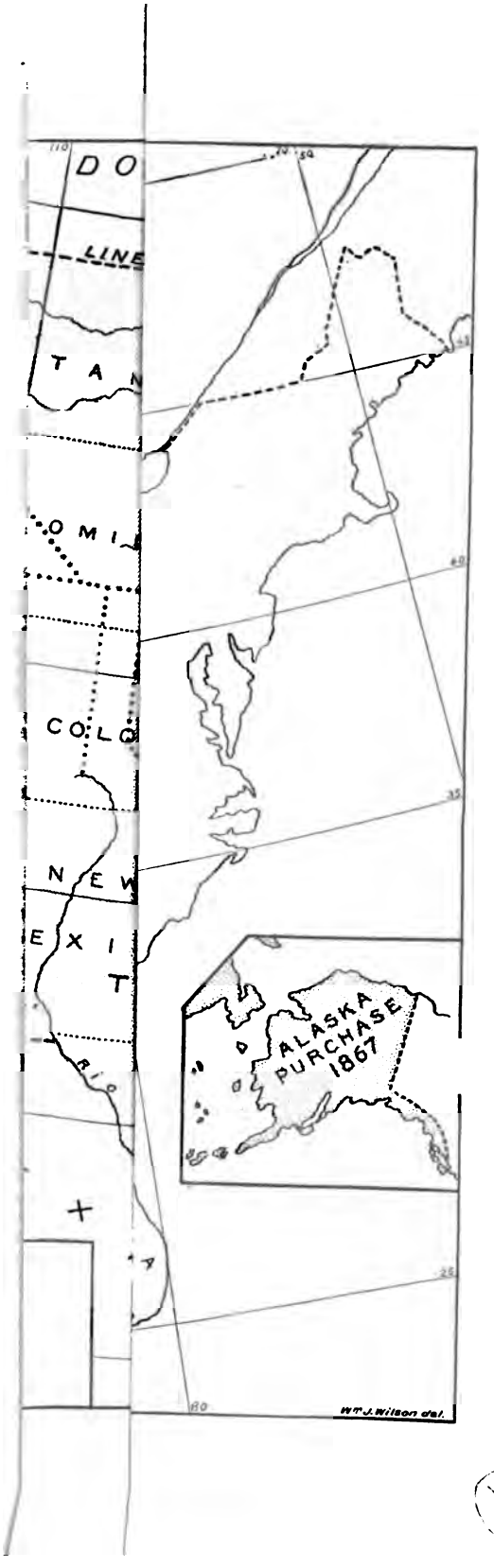
[1] Why Stevens so acted is uncertain. President Andrew Johnson has left a memorandum purporting to be the real explanation of how the appropriation bill was pushed through the House. "Twenty thousand dollars," it declares, "was paid to R. J. Walker and F. P. Stanton for their services—N. P. Banks, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, $8,000, and . . . the incorruptible Thaddeus Stevens received as his 'sop' the moderate sum of $10,000—All these sums were paid by the Russian Minister directly or indirectly to the respective parties to secure appropriation of money the Government had stipulated to pay the Russian Government in solemn treaty which had been ratified by both Governments."

The entire memorandum is printed by Professor Dunning, in *The Political Science Quarterly* for September, 1912.

[2] Vote by yeas and nays, 113 to 43. The list is given in *Cong. Globe*, 2d Sess., 40th Cong., Part III, p. 4055.

[3] July 18, 1868. *Ibid.*, Part V, p., 4216,

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 4497–4498.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